SO SEND I YOU

A Series of Missionary S[illegible]

OSWALD CHAMBERS

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SO SEND I YOU

A Series of Missionary Studies

by

OSWALD CHAMBERS

Author of

"My Utmost for His Highest," "Psychology of Redemption,"
"Studies in the Sermon on the Mount,"
etc., etc.

"When Thy face looketh
forth from all men's faces . . ."

LONDON:
SIMPKIN MARSHALL, LIMITED
STATIONERS' HALL COURT, E.C.4

FIRST PUBLISHED 1930

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
IN THE CITY OF OXFORD
AT THE ALDEN PRESS

FOREWORD

A preface or foreword is scarcely needed to introduce the reader to this treasure-house of thought on missions. Those who have read other books by our friend, Oswald Chambers, know what to expect. A message not for superficial minds and hearts. Those who love to think on the kingdom and whose heart the King has entered will not be disappointed as they read these pages.

These stirring talks were given to the students at the Bible Training College in London, of which Rev. Oswald Chambers was Principal, before he went out to Egypt. The students that heard him are now scattered in many parts of the world, and proving faithful witnesses of Christ.

The twenty-two short chapters are in a sense Bible-studies, but they are not mere Bible-readings – strings of texts with a moral. They whisper the secret of the burning heart, of the fully surrendered life, of a love that will not let go. The words pulsate with life and are a clarion-call away from idle day-dreams to the stern path of duty. One sentence, among many others, specially riveted my attention and sums up the style, the man, and the message: 'In my study am I a wool-gatherer or like a man looking for his Lord?'

This little book will not find casual readers, but the thoughtful reader will want to read it a second time and God will bless the message.

S. M. ZWEMER.

Princeton, N.J.

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THE CALL

(1) The Voice of the Nature of God.– 'And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send and who will go for Us? Then I said: Here am I, send me.' Isaiah vi. 8. When we speak of a call we nearly always leave out one essential feature, viz.: the nature of the one who calls. We speak of the call of the sea, the call of the mountains, the call of the great ice barriers. These calls are heard by only a few because the call is the expression of the nature from which the call comes, and can only be heard by those who are attuned to that nature.

The call of God is essentially expressive of the nature of God, it is His own voice. Paul says that God commends His *own* love towards us, i.e., the love that is exactly expressive of His nature. Get that thought with regard to the call of God. Very few of us can hear the call of God because we are not in the place to answer, the call does not communicate because we have not the nature of the One who is calling. In the case of Isaiah, his soul was so attuned because of the tremendous crisis he has passed through that he recorded to his amazed soul the call of God. God did not shout at Isaiah, Isaiah overheard Him saying '*Who will go for Us?*' It was not that God laid a strong compulsion on Isaiah, but that Isaiah was in the presence of God and he overheard, as it were, the soliloquy of God,

and in conscious freedom he replied, '*Here am I, send me.*'

There is a good deal of instruction to be got by watching the faces of people in certain surroundings, e.g., by the sea shore, in an art gallery, during music – you can tell at once if they are listening to the call of the thing or simply reflecting themselves. Most of us have no ear for anything but ourselves, anything that is not 'me' we cannot hear. We are dead to and without interest in the finest music, we can yawn in a picture gallery, be uninspired by a sunrise or a sunset. That is true not only of the soul's denseness to natural beauties or to music and art and literature, but true with regard to the awakening of the soul to the call of God. Most of us have no ear for anything but ourselves, we cannot hear one thing God says. To be brought within the zone of God's voice is to be profoundly altered.

The call of God is not the echo of my nature: the call of God is expressive of God's nature. The call of God does not consider my affinities or personality, it is a call that I cannot hear so long as I consider my personality or temperament. So long as I think about what I am fitted for, I will never hear the call of God; but immediately I am brought into the condition Isaiah was in, I am in a relationship to God whereby I can hear His call.

There are strands of the call of God providentially at work that you know and no one else does. It is the threading of God's voice for you on some particular line, and there is no use consulting anyone else about it, or saying that other people are dull because they do not hear it. 'Immediately

I conferred not with flesh and blood.' You feel amazed at the sense of God's call, and in your eagerness you talk to someone else about it, and you find that they much prefer to talk about their breakfast. Then comes the danger that you are apt to become contemptuous. Keep that profound relationship between your soul and God.

(2) The Vision of the New Life from God.—'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' John iii. 3. The new power of vision which the new birth gives, refers to the perception by the personal spirit, and it is a vision that perceives the rule of God. His rule was there all the time, but true to His nature; now that you have received His nature you can perceive His rule. It is a good thing to mark the times when you feel your personal spirit trembling on the verge of a new vision. It may be during a lecture or in prayer you nearly see something, then it goes; don't be distressed, it is the evidence of the new life from God. The characteristic of being born from above is a new power of vision to discern the rule of God. In new birth God imparts His nature whereby you understand His voice, and begin to discern His rule. The new life given by God is capable of immediately hearing the voice of God's own nature. Unless the nature of God comes into you, said Jesus to Nicodemus, you cannot understand Him, but if His nature comes into you, of course you will hear Him. (John iii. 6.) Intuition i.e., the power to sense that which cannot be explicitly stated, is a better guide than that which can be stated, but there is something infinitely more

satisfactory than that, viz. : the entrance of the Holy Spirit into a man at new birth enabling him to see the Kingdom of God and to enter into it.

(3) The Vocation of the Natural Life for God.– 'But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.' Gal. i. 15–16.

The call of God is the call according to the nature of God; where we go in obedience to that call depends entirely on the providential circumstances which God engineers. The call of God is not a call to any particular service, although our interpretation of the call may be, i.e., my contact with the nature of God has made me realise what I can do for God. The call to service is the echo of my identification with God. My service is the outcome of what is fitted to my nature; God's call is fitted to His nature, therefore I can never hear His call until I have received His nature. When I have received His nature, then the two natures, His nature and mine, work together – the Son of God reveals Himself in me, and I, the natural man, serve the Son of God in ordinary ways out of sheer downright devotion to Him.

The call to service is the result of my obedience to the realised call of God. Profoundly speaking, there is no *call* to service for God, it is our own actual 'bit,' the overflow of superabounding devotion to God. God does not have to come and tell me what I must do for Him, He gets me into a relationship with Himself whereby I hear His call and understand what He wants me to do, and I do

it out of sheer love to Him. To serve God is the deliberate love gift of a nature that has heard the call of God. What people mean when they say they have had a call to foreign service, or to any particular sphere of work, is that their relationship to God has enabled them to realise what they can do for God. Their natural fitting for service, and the call of God is identified in one in them.

The vocation of the natural life for God is stated by Paul – 'When it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,' i.e., that I might sacramentally express Him.

THE CALL OF GOD

'Unto me . . . is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' Eph. iii. 8.

(1) The Consciousness of the Call.– Jer. i. 5. Amos vii. 14–15. We are apt to forget the mystic supernatural touch of God which comes with His call. If a man can tell you how he got the call of God and all about it, it is questionable whether he ever had the call. A call to be a professional man may come in that explicit way, but the call of God is much more supernatural. The realisation of the call of God in a man's life may come as with a sudden thunder-clap or by a gradual dawning, but in whatever way it comes, it comes with the undercurrent of the supernatural, almost the uncanny, it is always accompanied with a glow – something that cannot be put into words. We need to keep the atmosphere of our mind prepared by the Holy Spirit lest we forget the surprise of the touch of God on our lives.

'Before I formed thee, I knew thee.' There are pre-natal forces of God at work in a man's life. We may be unconscious of it for long enough, but at any moment there may break the sudden consciousness of this incalculable, supernatural sur-

prising power that has got hold of his life before he has got hold of it himself.

Another force at work is the prayer of other people. You are born into this world and will probably never know to whose prayers your life is the answer. It may be your own father and mother who have been used by God to dedicate your life to Him before you were born. The prayers may have remained apparently unanswered, but in reality they are answered; and your life ought to be the answer in actuality. Our lives are the answers not only to the prayers of other people but to the prayer the Holy Spirit is making for us, to the prayer of Our Lord Himself. Once realise this and you will understand why it is that God does not say 'by your leave' when He comes into your life.

If we have been getting hard and metallic, untouched spiritually – not backsliding, but getting out of touch with God, we will find the reason is that we are allowing things to come in between us and the sense of God's call. At any minute God may bring the wind of His Spirit across our life and we will realise with a startled mind that the work we have been doing in the meantime is so much rubbish (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 12–13.) There is so much self-chosen service; people say – I think I will do this and that for God. Unless we locate ourselves in work for God in accordance with His supernatural call, we will meet havoc and disaster and upset. The moment that the consciousness of the call of God dawns on us, we know that it is not a choice of our own at all, the consciousness is that of being held by a power we do not know. *I have chosen*

him. If we are saved and sanctified we are called to testify to that; but the call to preach is something infinitely other and belongs to a different category. Paul describes it as a necessity – 'Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.'

'Then answered Amos . . . I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto My people Israel.' (Amos vii. 14–15). The only way I can begin to fulfil the call of God is by keeping my convictions out of the way, my convictions as to what I imagine I am fitted for. The fitting goes much deeper down than the natural equipment of a man.

Whenever the call of God is realised, the feeling that 'I am called to be a missionary' is a universal one, because the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in my heart, and 'God so loved *the world* . . .' We make a blunder when we fix on the particular location for our service and say – God called me *there*, and when God shifts the location, the battle comes – will I remain consistent to what I have said I am going to do, or will I be true to this insurgent call of God and let Him locate me where He likes? The most seemingly untoward circumstances will be used by God for the men and women He has called. No matter how much of wrong or of the devil there may seem to be in it, if a man is called of God, every force that is at work will be made to tell for God's purpose in the end. God watches all these things once a man agrees with His purpose for him, and He will bring not only the conscious life, but

all the deeper regions of life where we cannot get to, into harmony with His purpose. If the call of God is there, it is not within the power of untoward things to turn you. Your heart remains, not untouched by them, but unbroken, and you are surprised at yourself – Why didn't I go under here, and there? *I called thee.*

We try to make calls out of our own spiritual consecration, but when we are put right with God, He blights all our sentimental convictions and devotional calls, He brushes them all aside, and rivets us with a passion that is terrific to one thing we had never dreamed of, and in the condition of real communion with God, we overhear Him saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' and for one radiant, flashing moment we see what it is God is after, and say in conscious freedom – 'Here am I, send me.'

(2) The Character of the Call.– 1 *Cor.* ix. 16. Paul puts out of court the idea that the preaching of the gospel is chosen as a profession is chosen, he says it is a necessity that laid hold of him from his mother's womb, although for years he did not recognise it. Then suddenly it awakened in him and he realised that that was what God had been after all the time.

There is no mention of sin in Paul's apprehension, that came after, it was an apprehension of the call of God, a call which 'separated' him unto the gospel. 'I have chosen him . . . for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake.' God saved Paul in order to use him as broken bread and poured out wine for others. Paul says that

necessity is laid upon him now that he has realised God's call and knows the meaning of his life. There was no competitor for Paul's strength. Is there anything competing for our strength in our devotion to the call of God? It is not the devil but the 'little foxes' that spoil the grapes, the little annoyances, the little actual things that have competed for our strength, and we have not been able to pray, things have come in between, and our heart has got troubled and our mind disturbed over them. We have forgotten what Jesus said – 'As the Father hath sent Me, so have I sent you.' Our Lord never allowed anything to disturb Him out of His oneness with the Father, only one thing held Him –'Lo, I come to do Thy will.' With us there are things that compete for the strength that should be given to God only. Thank God for such places as this Bible Training College where God gives us time to be shut in quietly. He is letting us see how competitors for our strength will knock the consciousness of His call clean out when we get out into active work.

Have I been forgetting the character of God's call? Has there been a refusal to be made broken bread and poured out wine and the life consequently is being lived on the threshold of conscious devotion and conscious declension? That always happens when I do not realise that it is God who engineers my circumstances, when I 'despise the day of small things.' I refuse to see God's hand in the circumstances of the weather that prevented me on such and such a day, I refuse to see God's hand in the routine of my life, and as a result there is no sense

of arrestment by God, no being made broken bread and poured out wine for others, but a dryness and a deadness all through. This has nothing to do with the soul's salvation, but has to do with the obliterating of the character of the supernatural call of God for His work. Prayer has brought no light, studying God's word has brought no comfort. Then let me take a revision and see the little things in which it has not been God who was first but my notions, my affinities, consideration of my temperament.

If we are not in full conscious allegiance to Our Lord, it has not to do with our personal salvation but to do with this 'broken bread and poured out wine' aspect of life. God can never make me wine if I object to the fingers He uses to crush me. If God would only give me His own fingers, and say, 'Now, My son, I am going to make you broken bread in a particular way and everyone will know I am doing it . . .' But when He uses someone who is not a Christian, or someone I particularly dislike, or some set of circumstances I said I would never submit to, and He begins to make *these* the crushers, I object. I must never choose the scene of my own martyrdom, nor must I choose the things God will use to make me broken bread and poured out wine. His own Son did not choose. God chose for His Son a devil in His company for three years. We say – I want angels, I want people better than myself, I want everything to be significantly from God otherwise I cannot live the life or do the thing properly, I want to be always gilt-edged. Let God do as He likes. If you are ever going to be wine to drink, you must be crushed. Grapes cannot be

drunk, grapes are only wine when they have been crushed. I wonder what kind of coarse finger and thumb God has been using to squeeze you, and you have been like a marble and escaped? You are not ripe yet, and if God *had* squeezed you, the wine that came out would have been remarkably bitter. Let God go on with His crushing, because it will work His purpose in the end.

(3) THE COMMISSION OF THE CALL.– *John* xx. 21. *Luke* iv. 18–19. Have we answered to God's call in every detail during this Session? Have we really been the 'sent' ones of Jesus as He was the sent One of God? We can soon know – what kind of things have we objected to? What has been competing for our strength? What things have hindered our times of communion so that we have had to pray about them when we had no business to be in the place where we could notice them? We ought to have been living in John xiv. 1, but the heart has been troubled, and we have taken account of the evil, and consequently we have been less concerned about God's enterprises than about our own. Woe is me, said Paul, if I do not keep concentrated on this one thing, viz.: that I am called of God for His service.

'He hath sent Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.' Have we anything that separates us to the gospel? (Romans i. 1.) Do we preach the gospel to the poor – any kind of poverty, poverty of spirit, of heart, of purse, or do we say in effect, 'No, I have

nothing to give you?' God puts us through discipline not for our own sake but for the sake of His purpose and His call. Never debate about anything God is putting you through, and never try to find out why you are going through it. Keep right with God and let Him do what He likes in your circumstances, and you will find He is producing the kind of wine and bread that will be a benefit to His other sheep.

THE POINT OF SPIRITUAL HONOUR

'I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians.' Romans i. 14.

Do I feel this sense of indebtedness to Christ that Paul felt with regard to every unsaved soul I meet, every unsaved nation? Is it a point of spiritual honour with me that I do not hoard blessings for myself? The point of spiritual honour in my life as a saint is the realisation that I am a debtor to every man on the face of the earth because of the Redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I know what Jesus Christ has done for me, then I must spend myself to the last ebb to express my indebtedness to Him.

Paul realised that he owed everything to Jesus Christ, and it was in accordance with his sense of spiritual honour that he spent himself in expressing his indebtedness to Jesus Christ. When a man is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, he never talks in cold logic, he talks in passionate inspiration, and the inspiration behind all Paul's utterances is the fact that he viewed Christ as his moral Creditor. 'I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren . . .' The great characteristic of Paul's life was that he realised he was not his own. He had been bought with a price and he never forgot it. His whole life was based on that one thing. Paul

sold himself to Christ, 'the bondslave of Jesus.' 'I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.'

We are apt to have the notion that a man called to the ministry is called to be a different sort of being to other men. According to Jesus Christ, he is called to be the 'doormat' of other men, he is their spiritual leader, but never their superior. 'Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.' No matter how men treat me, Paul argues, they will never treat me with the hatred and the spite with which I treated Jesus Christ, and so long as there is a human being who does not know Jesus Christ, I am his debtor to serve him until he does. When the realisation comes home that Jesus Christ has served me to the end of all my meanness, my selfishness and sin, then nothing I meet with from others can exhaust my determination to serve men for His sake. I am not to come among men as a superior person, I am to come among men as the love slave of Jesus Christ, realising that if I am worth anything at all it is through the Redemption. That is the meaning of being made broken bread and poured out wine in reality.

'I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' Paul attracted to Jesus all the time, never to himself. He became, that is, a sacramental personality, wherever he went Jesus Christ helped Himself to his life. Many of us are subtly serving our own ends and Jesus Christ cannot help Himself to our lives; if I am abandoned to Jesus, I have no ends of my own to serve. Paul says –'I know how to be abased'– I know how to be

a 'doormat' without resenting it, because the mainspring of my life is devotion to Jesus.

Thank God, He does give us something to do when He has saved us, some way to express our gratitude to Him. He gives us a great noble sense of spiritual honour, the realisation that we are debtors to every man because of the Redemption of Jesus Christ. The sense of our debt to Jesus is so overwhelming that we are passionately concerned for that brother, that friend, those unsaved nations, in relation to them we are the bondslaves of Jesus.

Am I doing anything to enable Jesus Christ to bring His Redemption into actual manifestation in other lives? I can only do it if the Holy Spirit has wrought in me this sense of spiritual honour. When I realise what Jesus Christ has done for me, then I am a debtor to every human being until they know Him too, not for their sake, not because they will otherwise be lost, but because of Jesus Christ's Redemption. Am I willing to sell myself to Jesus, to become simply His bondslave, in order that He may see of the travail of His soul?

The great motive and inspiration of service is not that God has saved me and sanctified me, or healed me, all that is a fact, but the great motive of service is the realisation that every bit of my life that is of value I owe to the Redemption; therefore I am a bondslave of Jesus. I realise with joy that I cannot live my own life, I am a debtor to Christ, and as such I can only realise the fulfilment of His purposes in my life. To realise this sense of spiritual honour means to be spoilt for this age, for this life, spoilt from every standpoint but one, saving as I can

disciple men and women to the Lord Jesus. Paul was a lonely debtor in a world of repudiators. Does your brother repudiate the Redemption of Jesus? To him the net result of your life works only on one line of appeal, viz., the line of Redemption. He takes no account of you on any other line. Never let that deter you from spending for their souls every ounce of spiritual energy God gives you. It will work the Redemption in actual manifestation in lives presently. Whatever you spend of yourself in the fulfilling of your sense of spiritual honour will come back to you in absolute re-creation, physical and moral and spiritual.

'If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.' (1 John v. 16.) Quit praying about yourself, and be spent in vicarious intercession as the bondslave of Jesus. How many souls have we failed to bring through to God because of our crass unbelief in prayer? Jesus Christ places the emphasis on intercessory prayer – 'He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask Me anything in My name, that will I do.' That is reality; what is actuality! The actuality will take place, viz., the almighty interaction of God on other lives in answer to prayer based on Redemption, not prayer based on human sympathy or human plaintiveness. We pray on the fundamental basis of the Redemption, and our prayers are made efficacious

by the personal presence of the Holy Ghost who makes real *in* us what Jesus did *for* us. How God works in answer to prayer is a mystery that logic cannot penetrate, but that He does work in answer to prayer is gloriously true. We have all got faith in God, but is our faith pre-eminent when it comes in contact with actualities? Our part in intercessory prayer is not to enter into the agony of intercession, but to utilise the common sense circumstances God has put us in, and the common sense people He has put us amongst by His providence, to bring them before God's throne and give the Holy Spirit a chance to intercede for them. That is how God is going to sweep the whole world by His saints.

Am I banked in unshaken faith on the Redemption of Jesus Christ? Is it my conviction among men that every man can be presented 'perfect in Christ Jesus?' Or do I allow men's sins and wrongs so to obliterate the power of the Redemption that I sink under them? Jesus said –'he that believeth on Me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water . . . i.e., by active belief based on the Redemption of Jesus, and by prayer and service based on that same Redemption.

'Life is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom,
. . . . .
And batter'd by the shocks of doom
To shape and use.'

It is always well to go back to the foundation truths revealed in God's word regarding what He expects of the man or woman who wishes to be what He wants. 'Called to be saints,' that is what He expects.

Thank God for the sight of all you have never yet been. The vision is not an ecstasy or a dream, but a perfect understanding of what God wants, it is the Divine light making manifest the calling of God. You may call the vision an emotion or a desire, but it is something that absorbs you. Learn to thank God for making known His demands. You have the vision, but you are not there yet by any means. You have seen what you are not yet but what God wants you to be. Are you prepared to have this 'iron dug from central gloom' battered into 'shape and use?' 'Battering' conveys the idea of a blacksmith putting good metal into right useful shape. The batterings of God come in commonplace days and commonplace ways, God is using the anvil to bring you into the shape of the vision. The length of time it takes God to do it depends

upon you. If we prefer to loll on the mount of transfiguration, to live on the memory of the vision, we are of no use to live with the ordinary stuff of which human life is made up. We have not to live always in ecstasy and in conscious contemplation of God, but to live in reliance on what we saw in the vision when we are in the midst of actualities. It is when we are going through the valley to prove whether we will be the 'choice' ones that most of us turn tail; we are not prepared for the blows which must come if we are going to be turned into the shape of the vision. It does not matter with what the vision is in connection, there is always something that corresponds to the valley of humiliation. God gives us the vision, then He takes us down to the valley to batter us into its shape, and it is in the valley that we faint and give way, and all the time God is wanting to get us through to the veritable reality.

Abraham. In Genesis xv. 1, we read 'After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.' After the vision, there followed the valley of humiliation, and Abraham went through thirteen years of silence. Genesis xvi. is an illustration of the danger of listening to good advice when it is dark instead of waiting for God to send the light. The act of Abraham and Sarah produced a complexity in God's plan all down the ages. The intervening years have brought Abraham through his valley of humiliation. During those years of silence all Abraham's self-sufficiency was destroyed, every

strand of self-reliance was broken, there was no possibility left of relying on common sense ways, and when Abraham had exhausted all human strength and wisdom, then God appeared to him. 'And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.' (Gen. xvii. 1.) No vision this time, but Reality. Abraham after his humiliation was in a fit state to stand the reward, viz., God Himself. Abraham became a man more sure of God than of anything else.

The one thing for which we are all being disciplined is to know that God is real. As soon as God becomes real, other people become shadows. Nothing that other saints do or say can ever perturb the one who is built on the real God. 'In all the world, my God, there is none but Thee, there is none but Thee.'

The danger is to try to anticipate the actual fulfilment of the real vision. On the mount of transfiguration, when we saw clearly a real vision of what God wanted, we transacted business with God spiritually, and then immediately afterwards there was nothing but blank darkness. Remember Isaiah's word—'Who is among you . . . that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' The temptation is to work up enthusiasm, to kindle a fire of our own and walk in the light of it. God's 'nothings' are His most positive answers. We have to stay on God and wait. Never try to help God fulfil His word.

Moses. 'And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens.' (Exodus ii. 11.) That is an indication of the vision of God's purpose for Moses, viz., the deliverance of his brethren. It is a great moment in a man's life when he realises that he has to go a solitary way alone. Moses was 'learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,' a man in a royal setting by the providence of God, and he saw the burden of God's people, and his whole heart and mind was ablaze with the vision that he was the man to deliver them. He *was* the man to deliver his people, but not yet, there was something in the road, and God sent him for forty years into the wilderness to feed sheep. Imagine what those years must have meant to Moses – realising on the threshold of his manhood the vision of what he was to do, seeing as no one else could see the burdens of his people, and feeling in himself the certainty that he was the one to deliver them – how he would ponder over God's ways all those forty years.

Then in Exodus iii. we read that God appears to Moses and says – 'Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharoah, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt.' At the first, Moses was certain that he was the one to deliver his people, but forty years have passed since the vision came, and there is a different characteristic in Moses now. It is no longer the big 'I am,' but the little 'I am.' When God comes with a renewal of the call, Moses has got the quaver of the little 'I am'– 'Who am I, that I should go?'

The little 'I am' always sulks when God says Do. And the Almighty's reply to Moses is full of strirring indignation –'I AM THAT I AM hath sent thee.' The big 'I am' and the little 'I am' have to go until there is no 'I am' but God, He must dominate. Let the little 'I am' be shrivelled up in God's indignation. Is it not illuminating how God knows where we are, and the kennels we crawl into, no matter how much straw we get under! He will hunt us up like a lightning flash. There is no human being knows human beings as God does.

'Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock.' (Exodus xxxiii. 21.) Moses has come to the Reality of all realities, viz., Recognition by God. The recognised place in God's mind for Moses was by Him on the rock, recognised by God as His true yoke fellow. Nothing can deflect the life that has once been placed by God on the rock. After the forty years of humiliation Moses was in a fit state to receive the recognition of God without being unduly lifted up.

'There is a place by Me . . .' No man ever gets beside God who has not first been beside himself and knocked out of his wits with worry and anxiety about the mess he has made of things. That is the meaning of conviction of sin. And the realisation – 'What a fool I have been! how wicked and vile, and I ought to have been this and that!'

Moses' experience was of the type in which the certainty is brought home that God has been preparing you for something, and you realise that you have the power potentially to do what He wants. You can recall the perfect reality of the vision, the

clear understanding of what God said to you then. You say – 'I know He said it, I almost saw Him, it was so real; I know God called me to be a missionary – but it was a long time ago, and I suppose I was mistaken, for look at me now – something in an office.' You know you are not mistaken. The call was right, but you were not ready for it. God has to season us, there has to be a time of humiliation before the vision is turned into verity. We have to learn not only how useless we are, but how marvellously mighty God is. 'Many are called, but few prove the choice ones.'

Think of the enormous leisure of God! He never gets in a hurry. We are in such a frantic hurry. We get down before God and pray, then we get up and say, It is all done now, and in the light of the glory of the vision we go forth to do the thing, but it is not real, and God has to take us into the valley, to put us through fires and floods to batter us into shape, until we get into the condition in which He can trust us with the reality of His recognition of us.

Isaiah. 'In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.' (Isaiah vi. 1.) Isaiah stands for another type of the vision of the call of God. In the profound grief of the greatest bereavement of his life, Isaiah saw the Lord, and right on top of the vision came deep and profound dejection on account of sin and unworthiness. 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the Lord

of hosts.' The effect of the vision of the holiness of the Lord was to bring home to Isaiah that he was a man of unclean lips, deep dejection at his utter unfitness to be anything like what he had seen. Then the live coal from off the altar was laid upon his mouth, i.e., the cleansing fire was applied where the sin had been concentrated, and in the communion with God resulting from his intense spiritual cleansing, Isaiah overheard God say – 'Whom shall I send? and who will go for Us?' and from heart-break and disenchantment to simple humble attachment, he said: 'Here am I, send me.' Isaiah was made the Representative of God.

Each one of us has our counterpart somewhere in the experiences of these three men of God. In the case of Abraham, his valley of humiliation lasted thirteen years; Moses – forty years, and Isaiah – a few minutes. No two of us are alike, each one stands alone before God. Your valley may be a darkness where you have nothing but your duty to guide you, no voice, no thrill, but just steady plodding duty; or it may be deep agonising dejection at the realisation of your unfitness and uncleanness and insufficiency.

Let God put you on His wheel and whirl you as He likes, and as sure as God is God and you are you, you will turn out exactly in accordance with the vision He gave you. Don't lose heart in the process.

If we have ever had the vision – and all of us probably have had, it may have been when we were little children, or when we were very ill, or after a bereavement – we may try as we like to get

satisfied on a lower level, but God will not let us. The goads of God are in, and it is hard to kick against the goads. Ever since the moment when we first had the vision, God has been at work getting us through the valley of humiliation, battering us into the shape of the vision, and over and over again we get out of God's hands and try to batter ourselves into our own shape, and say – Now this is the place I must be in, this is what the vision means. Keep paying the price, let God see that you are willing to live up to the vision.

OUR LORD'S SURPRISE VISITS

'Let your loins be girded . . . for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.' Luke xii. 35–40. The greatest need of the missionary is to be ready to face Jesus Christ at any and every turn, and it is not easy to be ready to do that, no matter what the experience of sanctification may be. The great battle all along is not so much against sin as against being so absorbed in work that we are not ready to face Jesus Christ. The one great need is not to face our beliefs and our creeds, or the question whether we are of any use or not, but to face Jesus Christ. This attitude of being ready to face Jesus means more and more disentanglement from so called religious work and more and more intense spiritual reality in so called secular work. The whole meaning of the Christian life from Our Lord's standpoint is to be ready for Him.

The element of surprise is always the note of the life of the Holy Ghost in us. We are born again by the great surprise—'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' (John iii. 8.) Men cannot tie up the wind, it blows where it lists; neither can the work of the Holy Spirit be tied up in logical methods. Jesus never comes where we expect Him, if He did He would not have said 'Watch.' 'Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye

think not.' Jesus appears in the most illogical connections where we least expect Him, and the only way a worker can keep true to God amidst the difficulties of work either in this country or in heathen lands is to be ready for His surprise visits. We have not to depend on the prayers of other people, not to look for the sympathy of God's children, but to be ready for the Lord. It is this intense reality of expecting Him at every turn that gives the life the attitude of child wonder that Jesus wants it to have. When we are rightly related to God, life is full of spontaneous joyful uncertainty and expectancy,– I do not know what God is going to do next; and He packs the life with surprises all the time. That is the line on which Our Lord always comes, and it is the line we are apt not to look for Him. It comes home in ways like this: You prepare a sermon or an address very carefully, and you feel God has given you a good time in the delivery of it, but nothing happens. At another time you talk without much consideration, and suddenly straight through there comes the certainty – Why, that is the Lord, that was said by Him, not by me. Beware of the idea that we can tie the Lord Jesus up by spiritual logic: 'this is where He will come, and that is where He will not come.' If we are going to be ready for Jesus whenever He comes we must stop being religious (i.e., using religion as a kind of higher culture), and become spiritually real, alert, and ready for Him.

'Let your loins be girded about.' (v. 35.) It is impossible to walk in the loose garments of an Eastern robe unless it be girt up. The writer to

the Hebrews counsels us to 'lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us' (R.V. marg. 'doth closely cling to us'). The writer is not talking of inbred sin, but the circumambient sin, the spirit of the religious age in which we live, which will entangle the feet of the saint and hinder his running the race. Loose, trailing, uninspired thinking about sin will very soon trip us up. Gird up the loose thinking about sin, about holiness, about the eternal realities and the call of the unseen things. It is amazing to see the unreadiness of even some of the most spiritual people, they are continually clogged and tripped up by the wrong thing. If we are looking to Jesus and avoiding the spirit of the religious age in which we live, and setting our heart on thinking along Jesus Christ's lines – we shall be called unpractical and dreamy, but when He appears in the burden and the heat of the day, we alone shall be ready. When you meet a man or woman who puts Jesus first, knit that one to your soul.

'And your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord.' Am I like a man looking for his Lord where no one sees me but God? In my study, am I a wool-gatherer or like a man looking for his Lord? Am I like a man looking for his Lord in my home, in my contact with other people – is the lamp of conscience trimmed and burning there? Our Lord does not trim the lamp, we have to, and that is not done once for all, but done once for always. Conscience in a saint looks after his scruples according to the light of God. As servants of God in other lands you will have to

go among people whose lives are twisted and perverted by unconscious corruption, but if your conscience is as a lamp trimmed and burning, then the Lord can visit others through you at any second.

Is the lamp of your affections burning clear? If not, you will lose out in that way quicker than in any other. Inordinate affection means that you have allowed convictions to go to the winds. Keep the centre of your heart for Jesus and watch inordinate affection as you would the devil. There is more reason why Christians are not ready for Jesus Christ's surprise visits to be found there than anywhere else.

Is the lamp of hope burning bright? And what a hope it is! 'We shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself.' 'Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.' Do you imagine that there will be crowds to come up to that standard? Jesus said No, it is one here and one there, always a 'little flock.' Our Lord is not talking of salvation, but about being His servants. Whenever Jesus got down to His truth, the crowds left Him. To-day the craze is for crowds.

The one great need for the missionary is to be ready for Jesus Christ, and we cannot be ready unless we have seen Him. We must trust no one, not the finest saint who ever walked this earth, if once he hinders our sight of Jesus. It is Jesus Christ we must be ready to meet; Jesus Christ for whom we work.

Readiness implies a right relationship to God and a knowledge of where we are at present. We are so

busy telling God where we would like to go. Most of us are on the wait for some great opportunity, anything that is sensational, and then we cry – Here am I. Whenever Jesus is in the ascendant, in revival times, when the exciting moment comes, we are there; but readiness for God and for His work means that we are ready to do the tiniest thing or the great big thing, it makes no difference. We are so built that we must have sympathy or we will never do our best, but this instinct is apt to be prostituted unless we get burned into our heart an understanding of what Jesus said: 'Lo, *I* am with you all the days.' He is the one who is surrounding us, listening and sympathising and encouraging. Our audience is God, not God's people, but God Himself. The saint who realises that can never be discouraged, no matter where he goes. The audience of the ready saint is God, He is the arena of all his actions. To know that God is the One who sympathises and understands and watches us will bring the ready soul into touch and sympathy with God. What we lack to-day is sympathy with God's point of view. Once we get into sympathy with God, He will bring us into touch with the real needs of men and women and with His purposes.

'Ye shall be My witnesses.' To be a witness means that when any duty presents itself we hear the voice of Jesus Christ just as He heard His Father's voice, and we are ready for it with all the alertness of our love for Him. The knowledge that Jesus expects to do with us as His Father did with Him becomes a closely imbedded conception of our life. 'I can put you where I like, in pleasant duties or in

mean duties, and you will know that I know where you are because the union is that of My Father and Myself.' 'One as We are.' That is the only simplicity there is, viz., the simplicity of a heart relationship to Jesus. Beware of believing that the human soul is simple or that human life is simple. The only simple thing there is is our relationship to God in Christ. If the devil can succeed in getting that relationship complicated, then the human soul and human life will appear to be simple, whereas in reality they are far too complex for us to touch. That is why Paul says 'I fear lest . . . your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus.' Keep that pristine simplicity from anything like tarnish.

Be ready for the sudden surprise visits of Our Lord, and remember there is no such thing as prominent service or obscure service, it is all the same with God, and God knows better than we do what we are ready to do. Think of the time we waste trying to get ready when God has given us a call! A ready person never needs to get ready. The bush that burned with fire and was not consumed is the symbol for everything that surrounds the ready saint. Anyone can see an ordinary whin bush, the ready soul sees it ablaze with God.

THE 'GO' OF PREPARATION

Matt. v. 23–24.

"Nerve us with patience, Lord, to toil or rest,
Toiling at rest on our allotted level,
Unsnared, unscared by world or flesh or devil,
Fulfilling the good will of Thy behest.
Not careful here to hoard, not here to revel,
But waiting for our treasure and our zest
Beyond the fading splendour of the west,
Beyond this deathstruck life and deadlier evil.
Not with the sparrow building here a house,
But with the swallow tabernacling, so
As still to poise alert, to rise and go
On eagle wings, with wing outspeeding wills,
Beyond earth's gourds and past her almond boughs, –
Past utmost bound of the everlasting hills."

By 'preparation' is meant not something suddenly accomplished, but a process steadily maintained. It is easy to imagine that we get to a settled state of experience where we are complete and ready; but in work for God it is always preparation *and preparation*. Moral preparation comes before intellectual preparation, because moral integrity is of more practical value than any amount of mental insight.

(1) Moral Preparation. Paul in writing to the Philippians (ch. iii.) mentions two 'perfections'; v. 12. 'not as though I . . . were already *perfect*'; v. 15. 'Let us therefore, as many as be *perfect* . . .' v. 12. refers to the perfection of attainment, and v. 15. to the perfection of adjustment to God.

When by the experience of sanctification we are in perfect adjustment to God, we can begin to live the perfect life, that is, we can begin to attain. A child is a perfect human being, so is a man; what is the difference? The one is not yet grown, the other is full grown. When we are sanctified, we are perfectly adjusted to God, but remember, we have done nothing yet, we are simply perfectly fit to begin; the whole life is right, undeserving of censure in the sight of God, now then let us begin to attain in our bodily life, to prove that we are perfectly adjusted.

> 'Somewhere in the metropolis there exists what is probably a unique museum of broken materials used in engineering works. It is a splendidly organised testing laboratory wherein have been held many practical tests upon materials which have failed. The museum is used not only to discover the cause of the breakdown in the material, but also to test substances which it is proposed to employ in the construction of buildings and machinery.'

That is the purpose of such places as this Bible Training College – for the testing of material to be used in God's service. Remember, nothing and no one can detect us saving God. We are in the quarry now and God is hewing us out. God's Spirit gathers and marks the stones, then they have to be blasted out of their holdings by the dynamite of the Holy Ghost, to be chiselled and shaped and lifted and placed in the heavenly places. God grant that many may go through the quarrying and the chisselling. Think of the scrutiny of each of us by

Jesus Christ! Think of His eyes fastening on us and pointing us out before God as He says – 'Father, that is My work; that is the meaning of Gethsemane, that is the meaning of Calvary. I did all that man's work in him, all that woman's work in her, now You can make use of them.'

(*a*) *Heroism and Sacrifice.* 'If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar . . . (v. 23.) The Jews were scrupulous over external purity, and if, on the way to the Temple to offer his paschal lamb, a man should recollect that he had leaven in his house, he must hasten back and remove the leaven, and then when he had purged his house, carry his offering to the altar.

The sense of the heroic appeals readily to a young Christian. Take Peter, for instance. Humanly speaking, what attracted Peter to Jesus was his sense of the heroic. When Jesus said 'Follow Me,' Peter followed at once, it was no cross to him, it would have been a bigger cross not to follow for the spell of Jesus Christ was on him. We are apt to under-estimate this enthusiastic sense of the heroic, but it would be a terrible thing to be incapable of it, a terrible thing to be incapable of making such a declaration as Peter made – 'I will lay down my life for Thy sake.' Peter meant what he said, but he did not know himself. It is the scrutiny of our Lord's words that brings the tide of enthusiasm suddenly to the test. Many of us have been to the altar for service, but are we willing to bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar? The altar means fire – burning and purification and insulation for one purpose – to detach us to God.

Along with the sense of the heroic, there is a base element of selfishness, a lurking desire to fix the scenery of our own martyrdom. We feel if only we could fix the place and the spectators, we would go all lengths. But God fixes the place.

The illustration Our Lord used in vv. 21-22 is unfamiliar to us, but the application is familiar. He here illustrates the descending scale of wrong tempers of mind. An angry man was in danger of being brought before the rulers for judgment; a contemptuous, disdainful man was regarded in the same way as a blasphemer and was brought before the rulers of the Sanhedrin; the man who gave way to abuse was in danger of being classed with the criminals and flung out on the scrap heaps where the fires burned up the rubbish.

(*b*) *Hardship of Sensitiveness.* 'And there remember-berest that thy brother hath ought against thee . . .' Not –'there you rake up by a morbid sensitiveness,' but – 'there you remember,' the inference is that it is brought to your conscious mind by the Spirit of God. Never object to the intense sensitiveness of the Holy Spirit in you when He is educating you down to the scruple. When we are first put right with God, it is the great general principles that are at work, then God begins to make the conscience sensitive here and there. Don't quench the Spirit. His checks are so tiny that common sense cannot detect them. If there is a sense of being out of touch with God, then at the peril of our soul we go and ask someone else what we have done wrong, we must go direct to God. The other soul is never so keen as the Spirit of God. When He checks,

never debate, but obey at once. It is not a question of having the law of God put in front of our mind: 'This is what you must do and that is what you must not do,' and then deliberate disobedience on our part. It is more an instinct of the spirit, an instantaneous feeling, a still small voice which we can easily quench; but if we do quench it, we become soiled, and every time the check comes and we do not heed it, the soiling is deepened. 'Grieve not the Spirit.' He does not come with a voice like thunder, with a great strong emphatic utterance – that may come ultimately; but at the beginning His voice is as gentle as a zephyr, yet at the same time it can only be described as an imperative compulsion – this voice must be obeyed.

The 'go' of preparation is to let the word of God scrutinise. We are full of the sense of heroic sacrifice, and it seems hard to be reminded of things that happened in the past; but the thing that the Holy Spirit is detecting is the disposition that will never work in His service.

Over and over again men have gone into work for God in order to evade concentration on God on these lines. The note of false enthusiasm is the 'condition of the heathen,' the need is made the call, but it is an altogether artificial enthusiasm. No enthusiasm for humanity will ever stand the strain that Jesus Christ will put on His workers. Only one thing will stand the strain, and that is a personal relationship to Jesus of a man or woman who has gone through the mill of God's spring-cleaning until there is one purpose only – 'I am here for God to use me as He will.'

(2) Mental Preparation. (*a*) *Direction by First Impulse.* 'Leave there thy gift before the altar . . .' When God shows you something to do, don't be sulky with God, don't say – Oh well, I suppose after all God does not want me; don't affect a heaviness of soul because other missionaries are not what they ought to be; don't criticise the missionary society you belong to: Our Lord's instruction is to leave your gift and go, i.e., take your direction from the conviction He gave you when you first offered yourself to Him. Have nothing to hide from God. If you have, then let God riddle you with His light. If there is sin, *confess* it, not *admit* it. Am I willing to obey my Lord and Master in this particular, no matter what the humiliation may be to my right to myself?

(*b*) *Departure to the Former Condition.* 'And go thy way . . .' Our Lord's direction is simple – Go back the way you came and put that thing right. Never put a thing aside because it is insignificant. If you trace it down, the insignificant thing has at the back of it the disposition of my right to myself. Trace a scruple to its base and you find a pyramid; if you deal with the scruple, God will deal with the pyramid. The thing itself may be a detail, it is the disposition behind that is wrong – the refusal to give up the right to myself – the thing God intends us to do if we are ever going to be disciples. Never discard a conviction, if it is important enough for the Spirit of God to have brought it to our mind, that is the thing He is detecting. We were looking for a great big thing to do and God is telling us of some tiny thing, but at the back of the tiny thing is the central

citadel of obstinacy. 'Do you think I am going to humiliate myself? Besides, if I do this thing, it will cause others to stumble.' No one will ever stumble if we do what is right and obey what God indicates. Never remain true to a former confession of faith when God's Spirit indicates you have something else to do. Go the way indicated by the conviction given you at the altar. It is a marvellous thing to experience what God detects in us for His spring-cleaning.

(3) Spiritual Preparation. (*a*) *The Unblameable Attitude in Human Life.* 'First be reconciled to thy brother. 'Unblameable' does not mean faultless, but undeserving of censure. Jesus is saying – Have an attitude of mind and temper of spirit to the one who has something against you that makes reconciliation as natural and as easy as breathing. Jesus does not mention the other person – *you* go. There is no question of rights. The stamp of the saint is that he can waive his own rights and obey the Lord Jesus. That is the temper of soul to be in all through, unblameable in our attitude towards one another. Our Lord demands that there be not a trace of resentment even suppressed. A wrong temper of mind is the most blameworthy thing there is. It is not only what we say but what we think that tells.

(*b*) *The Unblameable Attitude in Divine Life.* 'And then come and offer thy gift.' The process is clearly marked by Our Lord: First, the heroic spirit of sacrifice, then the sudden checking by the sensitiveness of the Holy Spirit, the stoppage at the point of conviction and the going in obedience to

God's word, constructing an unblameable attitude of mind and temper to the one with whom we were wrong, and then the glad, simple, unhindered offering of our gift to God.

THE 'GO' OF RENUNCIATION

Luke ix. 57–62.

"Braver souls for truth may bleed;
Ask us not of noble deed!
Small our share in Christ's redemption –
From His war we claim exemption.
Not for us the cup was drained;
Not for us the crown of thorn
On His bleeding brow was borne:
Not for us the spear was stained
With the blood from out His side,
Not for us the Crucified
Let His hands and feet be torn!
On the list we come but low:
Not for us the cross was taken,
Us no bugle call can waken
To the combat, soldier fashion."

Missionary enterprise – to be Christian – must be based, not on the pathos of pity, but on the passion of obedience. The thing that moves us to-day is pity for the multitude; the one thing that makes a missionary is the sight of what Jesus did on the Cross, and to have heard Him say – '*Go.*' Jesus Christ pays no attention whatever to our sentiment. In the New Testament the emphasis is not on the needs of men, but on the command of Christ – 'Go ye.' The only safeguard in Christian work is to go steadily back to first principles.

(1) The Rigour of Rejection. Luke ix. 57-58. (*a*) *The Declaration of Dignified Devotion.* 'And

there came a scribe' (R.V. marg 'one scribe'– implying a scribe of the ruling class) 'and said unto Him, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.' (Matthew viii. 19.) Any remnant of consciousness that position in society, or profession, will be of value to Jesus is rigorously rejected by Our Lord. The first thing we think of is just that very thing – 'If that man were saved, what a wonderful influence he would be for Jesus Christ.' Any sense that the cause of Christ will be benefitted by giving myself to it, or any trace of listening to the suggestion of others that I would be of value to my Lord's service, will receive no encouragement by Jesus. The ruggedness of Our Lord's presentation of things strikes us as being very harsh. All He said to this man was –'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.' Our Lord has no respect of persons. We would have treated the man very differently – Fancy losing the opportunity of that man! Fancy bringing a north wind about him that froze him and turned him away discouraged! We do respect persons, we do place confidence in the flesh. We need to go back more often to the centre of the Christian faith, viz., the Cross of Jesus Christ. It is not a question of education nor of personal qualifications, but of understanding who Jesus is, and knowing what He has done for us. What is the test we put first for work at home or abroad? Sentimentally, we put the call of God first, but really, we are inclined to fix on the abilities of certain people. Our Lord pays not the remotest attention to natural abilities or natural virtues, He

heeds only one thing – Does that man discern Who I am ? Does He know the meaning of My Cross? The men and women Jesus Christ is going to use in His enterprises are those in whom He has done everything. In the conditions of discipleship which Our Lord lays down in Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33, He implies that the only men and women He will use in His building enterprises are those who love Him personally, passionately and devotedly, beyond any of the closest relationships on earth.

(*b*) *The Detection of Discernment.* 'But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them because He knew all men . . . for He knew what was in man.' (John ii. 24-25.) Always take these words of Our Lord's into account in interpreting His replies, and you will learn never to apologise for your Lord. Our Lord's attitude to this particular scribe was one of severe discouragement because He knew what was in him. Jesus Christ's answers are never based on caprice, but on a knowledge of what is in man. The answers of Jesus hurt and offend until there is nothing left to hurt or offend. (cf. Matt. xi. 6.) If we have never been hurt by a statement of Jesus, it is questionable whether we have ever really heard Him speak. Jesus Christ has no tenderness whatever to anything that is ultimately going to ruin a man in the service of God. If the Spirit of God brings to our mind a word of the Lord's that hurts, we may be perfectly certain there is something He wants to hurt to death.

The rigour of rejection leaves nothing but my Lord and myself and a forlorn hope. 'Let the hundredfold come or go,' says Jesus, 'your lodestar

must be your relationship to Me, and I have nowhere to lay My Head.'

(*c*) *The Discouragement of Drastic Discipline.* 'Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?' (Matt. xx. 22.)

The words of Jesus to this scribe knock the heart out of self-consciousness in service for Jesus, that means serving Jesus because it pleases one's self. Jesus told him that he would be homeless and possessionless if he followed Him. Do you expect to be a successful soul winner for Jesus if you are a disciple of His? Then you are doomed to a discouraging disappointment. Our Lord never called us to successful service; He calls us *to present Him* – 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.' God saves men; we are sent out to present Jesus Christ and His Cross, and to disciple the souls He saves. The reason we do not make disciples is that we are not disciples ourselves, we are out for our own ends.

(2) The Rally of Reluctance. v. 59–60. (*a*) *The Solicitation of the Lord.* 'And He said unto another, Follow Me.' Jesus said 'Follow Me' to a man who was straightway awakened into a ferment of sensitive apprehension. When the call of God begins to dawn, we are full of 'Why' and 'But' and 'What will happen if I do?' This man did not want to disappoint Jesus, nor to hurt his father. When Jesus called him, he was staggered into sensitive apprehension.

(*b*) *The Sensitiveness of the Loyal.* 'Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.' When Jesus

calls, there is the ordeal of conflicting loyalties. Probably the most intense discipline we have to go through is that of learning loyalty to God by the path of what looks like disloyalty to our friends. This is stated in its profoundest form in Luke xiv. 26 –'If any man come to me, and *hate* not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.' Learn to estimate the disproportion in your loyalties. A man will put his Lord to an open shame before he will be disloyal to a friend. But when any soul learns how to lay down his life for his Friend, Jesus Christ, other people promptly become shadows until they become realities in Him. When a sense of loyalty to father or mother perplexes you, picture Jesus showing to you His pierced hands and feet and wounded side and thorn-crowned head, and hear Him say –'Behold, what that must have meant to My mother, and it is I who call you to follow Me.' No one could have had a more sensitive love in human relationship than Jesus, yet He says there are times when love to father and mother must be hatred in comparison to our love to Him. The sense of loyalty to father or mother or friends may easily slander Jesus because it implies that He does not understand my duty to them. If Jesus had been loyal to His earthly mother, He would have been a traitor to His Father's purpose. Obedience to the call of Christ nearly always costs everything to two people, the one who is called and the one who loves that one. We put sensitive loyalty to relationships in place of loyalty to Jesus, every other love is put first and He has to take the last place. We

will readily give up sin and worldliness, but God calls us to give up the very closest, noblest and most right tie we have, if it enters into competition with His call. Beware of the inclination to dictate to God as to what you will allow to happen if you obey Him.

(*c*) *The Strenuousness of the Leaving.* 'Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.' These words sound stern, but it must be remembered that Jesus spoke them to only one class of men, viz., to the man who realised his duty to his father. There are only too many who are willing to leave father and mother to preach the gospel in other lands. Always take our Lord's sayings in the setting He puts them in, and before taking the word of Jesus for yourself see that you are in a similar case. In a conflict of loyalties, obey Jesus at all costs, and you will find He will remember your mother as He remembered His own mother on the Cross.

(3) The Renunciation of Reservations. Luke ix. 61-62. The blind devotion of the first enthusiasm has to be pulled down into discipline by God.

(*a*) *The Volunteer of Enthusiasm.* 'And another said, Lord, I will follow Thee, but . . .' A 'Yes, Lord, but . . .' is always the one who is fiercely ready but never goes. This man had one or two reservations, and one was that he wanted a valedictory service.

(*b*) *The Vacillation of Endearments.* 'But let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home in my house.' Beware of the vacillation that comes through thinking of the 'Mary's' and 'John's' I love at

home, my little mission, my church, my native place, it is apt to develop into wanting to fix the scene of your own martyrdom. The exacting call of Jesus has no margins of goodbyes, because 'Goodbye' is pagan, not Christian.

(*c*) *The Voice of Exactitude.* 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' In order to plough in a straight line, you must look neither at the plough nor behind you, but at the far end of the field ahead. When once the call of God comes, begin to go and never stop going, no matter how many delightful resting places there may be on the way.

Christ's call is 'Follow Me.' Our attitude ought to be—'Master, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee,' and Jesus will say '*Come.*'

THE 'GO' OF UNCONDITIONAL IDENTIFICATION

Mark x. 21.

" . . : Then came a slow
And strangling failure . I . .
Yet felt somehow
A mighty power was brooding, taking shape
Within me; and this lasted till one night
When, as I sat revolving it and more,
A still small voice from without said, – Seest thou not,
Desponding child, where spring defeat and loss?
Even from thy strength . . .
. . Know, not for knowing's sake,
But to become a star to men for ever;
Know, for the gain it gets, the praise it brings,
The wonder it inspires, the love it breeds:
Look one step onward, and secure that step!"

When the rich young ruler saw Jesus, he wanted to be like Him, he had the master passion to be perfect. Anything less than the desire to be perfect in a profession or calling is humbug, and the same in religion. Beware of quibbling over the word 'perfection.' It does not refer to the full consummation of a man's powers, it simply means perfect fitness for doing the will of God, a perfect adjustment to God until all the powers are perfectly fitted to do His will.

(1) The Look and the Loving of the Lord. 'Then Jesus beholding him . . .'

(*a*) *Who is the Lord?* This question must be answered by every man – who is ruling me? In our

Lord's calling of a disciple He never puts personal holiness in the front, He puts in the front absolute annihilation of right to self, and requires unconditional identification with Himself – a relationship with Him until there is no other relationship on earth in comparison. Luke xiv. 26 has nothing to do with salvation and sanctification, it has to do with unconditional identification with Jesus. Very few of us know the absolute 'go' of abandon to Jesus until we are in unconditional identification with Him.

Have you ever realised who the Lord is in your life? The call to service is not the outcome of an experience of salvation and sanctification, there must be the recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord and Master as well as Saviour. 'Whom say ye that I am?' Jesus makes that the abiding test. He makes human destiny depend absolutely on who men say He is. Membership of His Church is based on that one thing only, a recognition of who Jesus is and the public confession of it. Any man who knows who Jesus is has had that revelation from God. 'Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church.' What rock? The rock of the knowledge of who Jesus is and the confession of it.

'And behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good?' 'If I am only a good man, there is no more use coming to Me than to anyone else; but if you mean that you are discerning Who I am,

then comes the next condition: If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' The rich young ruler had to realise that there was only one good Being, viz., God, and that moral relationship to Him means the triumphant overcoming of everything that is not good. No man is moral naturally, many are innocent and clean living by necessity, but morality is the outcome of fight. Immediately I stop fighting, down I go. It is according to the power of my moral integrity that I become moral, that is, by fighting. The only 'good thing' from Jesus Christ's point of view is union with the one Good, viz., God, with nothing in between, and the steady maintenance of that union.

(*b*) *What is His Look?* 'Then Jesus beholding him loved him.' When Jesus saw the sterling worth and uprightness of the rich young ruler, He loved him. The natural virtues are lovely in the sight of Jesus because He sees in them the remnants of His Father's former handiwork.

Has Jesus ever looked at you? Get rid of your experiences as you ask yourself that question. Experiences may be a barrier to our knowing Jesus, we forget Him in being taken up in what He has done for us. The look of Jesus transforms and transfigures. His look means the heart broken for ever from allegiance to any other. Where you are 'soft' with God, it is because the Lord has looked at you; where you are hard and vindictive, insistent on your own way, certain that other people are more likely to be wrong than you are, it is because there are whole tracts of your nature that have never been transformed by His gaze.

(*c*) *What is His Love?* His love means that we are spoilt for every other interest in life saving as we can disciple men and women to Him. It is woe to every other ambition once Christ fixes His love consciously on a man or woman. The love of Jesus fixed on this man resulted in the biggest sorrow he ever had. How many of us know anything about suffering for Jesus' sake? We suffer for conscience' sake, for conviction's sake, but none of that is suffering for His sake.

(2) The Lack and Longing of the Loved. (*a*) *What Lack I Yet?* Our Lord instantly presses another penetrating IF –'If thou wilt be perfect . . .' The entrance into life is the recognition of who Jesus is, and we only recognise Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. Unless recognition of who Jesus is is put first, we will present a lame type of Christianity that excludes the type of man represented by this young ruler. In the majority of cases recognition of who Jesus is comes before conviction of sin. The second 'If' is more searching: If you want to be perfect – then come the conditions.

Do I really want to be perfect? Do I really desire at all costs to every other interest that God should make me as perfect as Jesus means it here? Can I say with Murray McCheyne –'Lord, make me as holy as You can make a saved sinner?' Is that really the desire of my heart? When once we are right with God, it is God who gives the desires and the aspirations. Our Lord had only one desire, and that was to do the will of His Father, and this desire is the characteristic of a disciple's life.

(*b*) *One thing thou lackest.* 'Go thy way, sell what-

soever thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.' The words mean the voluntary abandonment of riches and a deliberate, devoted attachment to Jesus Christ. We are so desperately wise in our own conceit that we continually make out that Jesus did not mean what He said, and we spiritualise His meaning into thin air. Jesus saw that this man depended on his riches. If He came to you or to me He might not say that, but He would say something equivalent, something that dealt with whatever He saw we were depending on. 'Sell whatsoever thou hast,' strip yourself of every possession, disengage yourself from all things until you are a naked soul, be a man merely and then give your manhood to God. Reduce yourself until nothing remains but your consciousness of yourself, and then cast that consciousness at the feet of Jesus Christ.

(*c*) *One Right Thing to do.* Our Lord is not talking about salvation, but – If you want to be perfect, those are the conditions, and you need not accept them unless you like, you are at perfect liberty to say – 'No thank you, I am much obliged for being delivered from hell and the abominations of sin, but when it comes this length it is rather too much to expect, I have my own interests in life.' Sell all you have got, barter it, obliterate it, said Jesus. Never push an experience you may have had into a principle by which to guide others. If you take what Jesus said to this rich young ruler and make it mean that He taught: Own nothing and follow Me, it is a getting out of what He is teaching by making it external. Our Lord told the young

ruler to loosen himself from his property because that is the thing that was holding him. The principle is one of fundamental death to possessions while being careful to use them aright.

Am I prepared to strip myself of what I possess in affection, in property, in virtues, in the estimation of others, to count it all loss in order to win Christ? I can be so rich in poverty, so rich in the consciousness that I am nobody that I will never be a disciple; and I can be so rich in the consciousness that I am somebody that I will never be a disciple. Am I willing to be destitute even of the sense that I am destitute? It is not a question of giving up outside things, but of making yourself destitute to yourself, reducing yourself to a mere consciousness and giving that to Jesus. I must reduce myself until I am a mere conscious man, fundamentally renounce possessions of all kinds, but not to save my soul – only one thing saves a man's soul, absolute reliance on the Lord Jesus, bringing nothing in the hands at all – and then give that manhood to Jesus.

'Go thy way, sell' . . . Jesus did not say – Sell what you have got and give the proceeds to the deserving poor, nor did He say – Consecrate it to My service. Jesus Christ does not claim any of our possessions. One of the most subtle errors is that God wants our possessions, He does not, they are not of any use to Him. He does not want my property, He wants me. 'Sell whatever you have got, and give the proceeds away; but for you – you come and follow Me.'

(3) The Light and Leading of the Life. 'And

thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.'

(*a*) *The Reduction and Renunciation.* 'But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.' When he 'heard that saying . . .' When we *hear* a thing is not when it is spoken, but when we are in a state to listen to it and to understand. Our Lord's statements seem to be so simple and gentle, and they go unobserved into the subconscious mind. Then when we come across something in our circumstances, up comes one of these words into our consciousness and we *hear* it for the first time, and it makes us reel with amazement. This man, when he heard what Jesus said, understood what He meant, he did not dispute it, he didn't argue, he heard it, and he went away expressionless with sorrow. He had no doubt as to what Jesus said, no debate as to what it meant, and it produced in him a sorrow that had not any words. He found he had too big an interest in the other scale, and he drooped away from Jesus in sadness, not in rebellion.

(*b*) *The Revelation and the Riches.* 'And thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' It is the trial of our faith that makes us wealthy in heaven. We want the treasure on earth all the time. We interpret answers to prayer on the material plane only, and if God does not answer there, we say He does not answer at all. 'Treasure in heaven' is faith in God that has been tried, otherwise it is only possible gold. 'Oh yes, I believe God can do everything.' But have I proved that He can do *one* thing? If I have, the next time a trial of faith comes I can go through it smilingly

because of the wealth in my heavenly banking account.

(*c*) *The Regulation and the Road.* 'And come, take up the cross, and follow Me.'

'Come and follow Me,' not, Find out the way, but – Come. You cannot come if there is any remnant of the wrong disposition in you because you are sure to want to direct God. 'Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest,' these words were spoken to the disciples, to men who had the appeal of the Highest on them, the aspiration, the longing, the master passion to be perfect –'Come unto Me, and I will rest you, stay you, poise you; take My yoke on you and learn of Me, and you will discover rest all along the way for yourself.' 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.' The road is the way He went. 'I will make the place of My feet glorious'– where is the place of His feet? Among the poor, the sick and sorrowful, among the bad and devil-possessed, among the hypocrites. And He says 'Follow Me – there.'

THE 'GO' OF SACRAMENTAL SERVICE

Matt. v. 41.

"Lord, I have fallen again – a human clod!
Selfish I was, and heedless to offend;
Stood on my rights. Thy own child would not send
Away his shreds of nothing for the whole God!
Wretched, to Thee who savest, low I bend:
Give me the power to let my rag-rights go
In the great wind that from Thy gulf doth blow.

Keep me from wrath, let it seem ever so right:
My wrath will never work Thy righteousness.
Up, up the hill, to the whiter than snow-shine,
Help me to climb, and dwell in pardon's light.
I must be pure as Thou, or ever less
Than Thy design of me – therefore incline
My heart to take men's wrongs as Thou tak'st mine."

To go the second mile means to do always your duty, and a great deal more than your duty in the spirit of loving devotion that does not even know it has done its duty. If you are a saint the Lord will tax your walking capacity to the limit. The supreme difficulty is to go the second mile *with God*, because no one understands why you are such a fool.

The summing up of Our Lord's teaching is that it is impossible to carry it out unless He can do a supernatural work in us. The Sermon on the Mount is not an ideal, because an ideal must have as its working power the possibility of its realisation in the disposition obsessed by it. 'Love your enemies;' 'Give to him that asketh thee,' these things have no

place in the natural disposition of a man. Jesus Christ is the only One who can fulfil the Sermon on the Mount. It is the statement of the working out in actuality of the disposition of Jesus Christ in the life of any man. We have to face ourselves with the teaching of Jesus and see that we do not wilt it away. The demands Our Lord makes on His disciples are to be measured by our Lord's own character.

Have we really come to the conclusion that if we are ever to be disciples it must be by being made disciples supernaturally? So long as we have the endeavour and the strain and the dead-set purpose to be disciples, it is almost certain we are not. Our Lord's making of a disciple is supernatural, He does not build on any natural capacity at all. 'Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.' (John xv. 16.) That is always the way the grace of God begins to work, it is a constraint we cannot get away from. We can disobey it, but we cannot generate it. The drawing power is the supernatural grace of God, and we can never trace where that work begins. We have to choose to obey and He does all the rest. To face ourselves with the standards of Jesus produces not delight, but despair to begin with, because immediately we get to despair we are willing to come to Jesus as paupers and to receive from Him. Despair is the initial gateway to delight in faith.

(1) The Dangers of Intensity on Alien Ground. In Our Lord's day the class known as Zealots hated the Roman dominance with an intensity of detestation; they would bow the heads and have

the necks severed by the Roman sword rather than obey the tyrant. Just as the early disciples of Jesus were on alien ground politically, so as the disciples of the Lord we are on alien ground in this world. The intensity of an early devotion to Jesus must make for fanaticism to begin with. An intense person sees nothing, feels nothing, and does nothing unless it be violent. There was a difference between the disciples of John the Baptist and the disciples of Jesus. John would have taught his disciples asceticism, there was no sociability about him. When Jesus came He was not marked by intense religious zeal in the way everyone else was. External intensities marked the religious age in which Jesus lived, but they did not mark Him. Our Lord did not identify Himself with the cause of the zealots: but He laid down His life as the Servant of Jehovah. We bring an alien atmosphere to the New Testament. Nowadays many would sum up Jesus as an idle man.

(*a*) *The Direction by Impulse.* In the training of the early disciples Our Lord persistently checked impulse, and Peter, the most impulsive of them all, got rebuke after rebuke for obeying impulse. Watch how the Spirit of God checks whenever we obey impulse. His checks always bring a rush of self-conscious foolishness and instantly we want to vindicate ourselves. Impulse must be disciplined into intuition. There was nothing of the nature of impulse about Our Lord, nor of cold-bloodedness, but a calm strength that never got into panics. Most of us develop our Christianity along the line of our temperament, not along the line of God.

To try and develop Christianity along the line of impulse is an impertinence when viewed alongside the strong Son of God. Some of us are like grasshoppers spiritually. Impulse is a natural trait in natural life, but in spiritual things Our Lord absolutely checks it because it always hinders. Discipleship is to be built not on natural affinities but entirely on the supernatural grace of God. The one characteristic of discipleship is the being made like Jesus.

(*b*) *The Dissipation of Impressions.* All human beings have some kind of affinity for everything God has made. Our Lord deliberately reduces the impressions arising from these natural affinities until He gets the heart established in grace. In Luke xiv. 26 Our Lord mentions the closest affinities, all of which have been created by God, and yet He says there are times when a man must hate them. Watch the way your nature reacts when you listen to some of the stern teaching of the Bible. There is a feeling of outrage, and yet at the same time the certainty that it is right. God's original order was that there should be no sin, and therefore every natural affinity could be indulged in; but sin entered in, and consequently when we become disciples the first thing we have to do is to live a maimed life and cut off many affinities. In the Sermon on the Mount Our Lord distinctly teaches the necessity of a maimed life. (Matt. v. 29-30). If you are going to be spiritual, says Jesus, you must barter the natural, i.e., sacrifice it. If we say – I do not want to sacrifice the natural for the spiritual; then, says Jesus, we must barter the spiritual. It is not a punishment,

but an eternal principle. Be prepared to be maimed, to be a one-eyed faddist, until your heart gets established. It is this dissipation of impressions that makes many a would-be disciple a deserter. Our Lord's statements embrace the whole of the spiritual life from beginning to end, and in v. 48 of Matthew v. He completes the picture He began to give in vv. 29-30 – 'Be ye therefore *perfect* as your Father in heaven is perfect.'

(*c*) *The Disposition of Interests.* The interests of the Son of God and of the disciple are to be identical. How long it takes to manifest that identity depends on the private history of the disciple and his Lord. Our Lord warns His disciples not to cast their pearls before swine. He is inculcating the need to examine carefully what we present in the way of God's truth to others. If Our Lord reduces our affinities and makes us live a maimed life in the meantime, at the peril of our spiritual life we explain it to those who are not there. A false idea of confessing makes us tell secrets that should never be told, they are between God and the soul. There are affinities of heart and of life that are dealt with by God in secret and we must never say a word about them to others. Other people seeing the limitations of the life say – What can there be wrong in this and in that? There is nothing wrong in it, but we know that it is at the peril of our life with God that we touch it. The maimed life and the misunderstood life must go on. Be prepared to be a limited fool in the sight of others, says Jesus, in order to further your spiritual character. We so much value the understanding of those we love most that Jesus

has to take the last place. A disciple in the making will often tell Jesus that his father or his mother or his friend or other interests must be heeded first, and the Lord administers no rebuke. The inevitable lesson is learned presently in a way in which it ought never to have been learned.

(2) The Delays in Identification. Passionate genuine affection for Jesus will lead to all sorts of vows and promises which it is impossible to fulfil. It is an attitude of mind and heart that sees only the heroic. We are not called to be heroes, but to be unobtrusive disciples. When we are right with God, the tiniest thing done out of love to Him is more precious to Him than any preaching of a sermon. We have introduced into our conception of Christianity heroic notions that come from paganism and not from the teaching of Our Lord. Jesus counselled His disciples that they would be treated as nobodies; He never said we would be brilliant or marvellous. We all have a lurking desire that we want to be exhibitions for God,– to be as it were in His show room. Jesus does not want us to be specimens, He wants us to be so wrapped up in Him that we never think about ourselves, nor does anyone else think about us, the only impression left by the life is that Jesus Christ is having unhindered way.

(*a*) *Walking on Water*. Matthew xiv. 29. Walking on water is easy to impulsive pluck, but walking on dry land as a disciple of Jesus is a different thing. Peter walked on the water to go to Jesus, but he followed Him afar off on the land. We do not need the grace of God to stand crises, human nature will do it, pride will do it, we can buck up and face the

music of a crisis magnificently, but it requires the supernatural grace of God to live twenty-four hours in the day as a saint, to go through drudgery as a saint, to go through poverty as a saint, to go through an ordinary, unobtrusive, ignored existence, as a saint, unnoted and unnoticeable. The 'show business,' which is so incorporated into our view of Christian work to-day, has caused us to drift far from Our Lord's conception of discipleship. It is instilled in us to think that we have to do exceptional things for God; we have *not;* we have to be exceptional in ordinary things, to be holy in mean streets, among mean people, surrounded by sordid sinners. That is not learned in five minutes. Jesus took these men in hand to train them, and at the end of three years of intimate companionship with Him, they all forsook Him and fled. Then they came to the end of themselves and all their self-sufficiency, and they realised that if ever they were going to be any different it must be by receiving a new Spirit, and after the Resurrection, Jesus 'breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' (John xx. 22.)

Do we really believe we need another Spirit? Are we basing our religious life on our impulses, on our natural affections, on what other people tell us we are; or are we based on what Jesus wants us to be? Jesus guides us by making us His friends.

(*b*) *Why cannot I follow Thee now?* John xiii. 37. Determination and devotion and protestations and vows are all born of self-consciousness and must die out of a disciple. A child never makes vows. We have to be so taken up with Jesus that we are never

impudent enough to vow anything. All our vows and resolutions end in denial because we have no power to carry them out. Natural devotion will always deny Jesus somewhere or other. Whenever the grace of God strikes a man, he never thinks of vowing anything, he is lost in an amazing devotion which is not conscious.

> 'Since mine eyes have looked on Jesus,
> I've lost sight of all beside.'

The domination of self-consciousness has to be put to death – 'I have vowed, I have promised, and I have consecrated.' It all has to go until there is only one 'I,' the Lord Jesus Christ.

(*c*) '*What is that to thee?*' John xxi. 22. A disciple is one who minds neither his own business nor any one else's business, but looks stedfastly to Jesus and goes on following Him. We read books about the consecration of other men, but it is all so much scaffolding, it all has to go, and the time has to come when there is only one thing left – following Jesus. One of the severest lessons we get comes from the stubborn refusal to see that we must not interfere in other people's lives. It takes a long time to realise the danger of being an amateur providence, i.e., interfering with God's order for others. We see a certain person suffering, and we say – 'He shall not suffer, and I will see that he does not, and we put our hand straight in front of God's permissive will to prevent it, and He says –'What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.'

These things are elements in our identification with Jesus. How long it takes Him to get us there depends on you and me. We cause delays to God

by persistently doing things in our own way, He never gets impatient, He waits until all these things have fallen away, and there is nothing left but identification with Him. To be absolutely centred in Jesus means that all things and all people are welcome alike to me because they are all arranged for in their times and seasons by my heavenly Father.

(3) The Discipline by Instruction in Apprehending Growth.– Beware of continually wanting to be thrilled. In the natural world the one who is always wanting experiences of ecstasy and excitement is disappointingly unreliable, and the same is true in the spiritual world. There are unemployables in the spiritual domain, spiritually decrepit people who refuse to do anything unless they are supernaturally inspired.

(*a*) *His Cross*. 'Him they compelled to bear His cross.' (Matthew xxvii. 32). Simon the Cyrenian, in unwillingly fulfilling the instruction given in the Sermon on the Mount, unconsciously points us a lesson, viz., that we must be identified with the cross of Christ before we will ever carry our own cross.

(*b*) *His Cup*. 'Ye shall drink of My cup.' (Matthew xx. 22-23.) This is not the cup of martyrdom, for Our Lord was not a martyr. We must be identified with the atoning death of Our Lord before we can be disciples. Many of us want to be disciples, but we do not want to come by way of His atoning death; we do not want to be compelled to be orthodox to the Cross of Christ, to drink the cup that He drank. But there is no other way. We must be regenerated, supernaturally made all over again, before we can be disciples.

(*c*) *His Confession*. 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.' (Luke xviii. 31.) That is the mightiest word on discipleship that Our Lord ever spoke, for Jerusalem was the place where He reached the climax of His Father's will for Him, and He identifies us with Himself in our going up to our Jerusalem.

We have become so taken up with the idea of being prepared for something that that is the conception we have of being a disciple, viz., that we are being prepared for something in the future. It is true, but it is also untrue. The attitude of the Christian life is that we must be prepared *now*, this second, this is the time. It is what we are in relation to Jesus that gives His heart satisfaction and furthers His Kingdom, not what we do or say for Him but what we are in Him. 'He that confesseth ME,' said Jesus. The word 'confess' means that every particle of our nature says the same thing, not the mouth only, but the very make up of the flesh and blood confesses that Jesus has come in the flesh. (John vi. 53.) It is easy to talk, easy to have fine thoughts, but none of that is being a disciple. Being a disciple is to live the life hid with Christ in God, being something that is an infinite satisfaction to Him every minute whether in secret or in public.

'Yet it was well, and Thou hast said in season
As is the Master shall the servant be:
Let me not subtly slide into the treason,
Seeking an honour which they gave not Thee:

Never at even, pillowed on a pleasure,
Sleep with the wings of aspiration furled,
Hide the last mite of the forbidden treasure,
Keep for my joys a world within the world.

He as He wills shall solder and shall sunder,
Slay in a day and quicken in an hour,
Tune Him a chorus from the Sons of Thunder,
Forge and transform my passion into power.

Ay, for this Paul, a scorn and a reviling,
Weak as you know him and the wretch you see,
Even in these eyes shall ye behold His smiling,
Strength in infirmities and Christ in me.'

(1) The Sure Characteristics. John xvii. 18, xx. 21-23. The great danger in missionary enterprise is that God's call is effaced by the needs of the people until human sympathy overwhelms altogether the significance of Jesus Christ's sending. 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.' A missionary is a saved and sanctified soul detached to Jesus. The one thing that must not be overlooked is the personal relationship to Jesus Christ and to His point of view; if that is overlooked, the needs are so great and the conditions so perplexing

that every power of mind and heart will fail and falter.

We are apt to forget that the one great reason for missionary enterprise is not first the elevation of the people, not first the education of the people not even first the salvation of the people, but first and foremost the command of Jesus Christ – 'Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all the nations.'

If we are going to remain true to the Bible conception of a missionary, we must go back to the source – a missionary is one sent by Jesus as the Father sent Him. The great dominating note is not first the needs of men but the command of Jesus, consequently the real source of inspiration is always behind, never in front. To-day the tendency is to put the inspiration in front – the great ideal is to sweep everything in front of us and bring it all out in accordance with our conception of success. In the New Testament the inspiration is put behind, the ideal remains behind, viz., the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to be true to *Him*, to be faithful to *Him*, to carry out *His* enterprises.

In revising the lives of men and women of God and the history of the Church of God, there is a tendency to say – 'What wonderfully astute wisdom those men and women had! how perfectly they understood what God wanted of them!' The truth is that the astute mind behind these men and women is not a human mind at all, but the Mind of God. We give credit to human wisdom when we should give credit to the Divine guidance of God through childlike people who were foolish enough in the

eyes of the world to trust God's wisdom and supernatural equipment, while watching carefully their own steadfast relationship to Him.

The New Testament lays down clearly what is the work of the missionary, viz., to disciple all nations according to the command of the Risen Lord. The method of missions is clearly stated in each of the four Gospels. Matthew states the farewell command which Jesus gave through the Holy Ghost to His disciples, and that command is to teach, or to disciple, all nations, not to make converts to our own ways of thinking, but to make disciples of Jesus. In Mark's Gospel the method is defined as preaching or heralding, accompanied by powers of healing, speaking with new tongues and the casting out of devils. In Luke's Gospel the method is described as witnessing unto Christ to the uttermost part of the earth, and in John's Gospel the method is described by Our Lord on His third appearance to the disciples, as feeding and tending His lambs and His sheep. These methods through which the life-giving truth may be presented are as varied as the needs and circumstances and conditions of the nations among whom the missionaries are placed.

Jesus did not say – Go and save souls. The salvation of souls is God's work. Jesus told the disciples to go and teach, i.e. disciple, all nations. The salvation of souls comes about through the ministry of God's word and the proclaiming of the Redemption by God's servants, but the command to the missionary is to disciple those who are saved. Every now and again the Church becomes content

with seeing people saved. When men get saved, then begins the disciple's work, and the great point about 'discipling' is that you can never make a disciple unless you are one yourself. When the disciples came back from their first mission, they were filled with joy and said – 'Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name,' and Jesus said – 'Do not rejoice in successful service, but rejoice that you are rightly related to God through Me.' Those who remain true to the call of God are those whose lives are stamped and sealed by God, they have one great purpose underneath every other thing, and that is to disciple men and women to Jesus.

(2) The Subject Matter. Luke xxiv. 45-48. The subject matter of missions is the Life and Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ for one purpose, repentance and the remission of sins. The subject matter of missions remains an unchangeable truth, a historic fact. 'The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' The Cross as it is manifested in the life of Our Lord is not the cross of a martyr – He came on purpose to die. Once men get away from the teaching of the New Testament, the first thing that happens is that sin is minimised and the meaning of the Cross of Christ is departed from. The Cross of Jesus Christ is the historic manifestation of the inherent nature of the Trinity. Through all the ages the perplexity in the minds of men who have not received the Spirit of God arises because the Bible presents something utterly unlike that which the natural heart and mind thinks it wants. The natural mind of man thinks in a circle

of God, i.e., everything is going to evolve and develop in a plain simple way. According to the Bible, things do not go as we expect them to, either in individual life or in history, but always at cross purposes to that. The symbol of the nature of God is not a circle, complete and self-centred; the symbol of God's nature is the Cross. The end God has in view is entirely different from that arrived at by man's unaided thinking. For instance, the conception that is working like leaven to-day all through missionary enterprise is this notion that we are going to evolve into a circle of brilliant success, and the great conflict that awaits the missionary to-day is the conflict against the evolutionary idea that everything is growing better. The Bible does not look forward to an evolution of mankind; the Bible talks of a *revolution* – 'Ye must be born again.' We have to get back to the preaching of the Cross, the remission of sins through the death of Our Lord.

(3) The Scriptural Method. John xxi. 15-17. The method is described by Our Lord as feeding and tending His lambs and His sheep. We continually get to the place where we see no one as sinful because we do not want to be made shepherds. The great challenge is made to the missionary himself. It is not that people are difficult to get saved, not that backsliders are difficult to reclaim, not that there is callous indifference on the part of people to the message – the challenge is to faith in the Lord – do we believe He is able? The Lord seems to come steadily to us in every individual case we meet – '*Believest thou that I am able to do this?*'

Whether it be a case of demon possession, bodily upset, mental twist, backsliding, indifference, difference of nationality and thought – the challenge is to me. Do I know my Risen Lord? Do I know the power of His indwelling Spirit? Am I wise enough in God's sight to bank on what Jesus told me? Am I foolish enough according to the wisdom of the world to do it? Or am I abandoning the supernatural position, which is the only one for a missionary, of boundless confidence in Jesus? If we take up any other method, we depart altogether from the scriptural method laid down by Our Lord – 'All power is given unto Me . . . therefore go ye.'

Every time God presents us with a problem in Christian work He gives us something to match it in our own heart, and if we will let His power work there, we will go forth with an unshakeable confidence in what He can do for any man. If once a man knows in his own life that God can do what Jesus said He could, he can never be put in the place where he will be discouraged. He may be put in the heart of the vilest and most terrible phases of heathenism, but he can never be discouraged, nor can he be defiled, because he has the very nature of God in him and he is kept like the light, unsullied.

(4) The Special Persons. Matt. xvi. 18 is Our Lord's statement as to what constitutes membership in His church, viz., a revelation of Whom He is and a public confession of it. No man knows who Jesus Christ is but by the Spirit of God, and the fact that He knows who Jesus is and makes confession

of it is the bedrock on which Christ builds His Church, according to His own word. The special person sent to do missionary work is every person who is a member of the Church of Christ. The call does not come to a special few, it is to everyone of us. The special call is to stay at home. The big call remains – 'Go,' and if I am staying I have to give God the reason. According to Our Lord, there is not a home church and a foreign church, it is all one great work, beginning at home and going somewhere else. Jerusalem was not the home of the disciples, Jerusalem was the place where Our Lord was rejected – ' begin there,' said Jesus. Our Lord said in His first sermon at Nazareth that it was God's way to send His message by strangers before it was accepted, and the history of the Church has proved that it is out of the mouth of strangers that the great awakenings have always come. Take any country that has had the life of God introduced into it, it has never been introduced by those belonging to the country, but always from the outside.

In Our Lord's conception all the world is the same to God, and the command to go embraces us all. Missionaries are ordained to preach, trained to teach and to heal, skilled to win savage races for Christ, but every method is to be evangelical, i.e., it is subordinated to the one great message of the remission of sins through faith in His blood (Romans iii. 25-26). No matter what line the missionary takes, whether it be medical or educational, he has only one purpose – one great truth has gripped him and sent him forth and holds him so that he has nothing else on earth to live for, and that is

to proclaim the Death and Resurrection of Christ for the remission of sins. The note of false missionary enterprise is to leave out the fundamental purpose of evangelisation and say that civilisation must come first. Robert Moffatt uttered solemn words when he said he little thought he would live to see the day when earnest missionaries would reverse the order of God, and whose watchword was not to evangelise first but to civilise. The illustration Our Lord gives in His parable is that the birds of civilisation come and lodge in the branches of the spiritual tree, and men say 'Now this is the thing!' and they have not seen His purpose one atom. If men have not seen God's purpose they are continually being misled and misguided by externals.

The one thing to watch in all our enterprise for God is that we do not get swamped out of personal relationship to Jesus Christ, the One who gives us the command – Go ye. 'I am made all things to all men,' says Paul, 'that I might by all means save some.' The one dominating purpose and passion at the heart of the missionary is his personal relationship to Jesus Christ. A missionary is a construction made through the Atonement by the God who made the universe. It is not a sentiment, it is true, that God spoils a man or woman for any other use in the world saving for one thing only, to win souls to Jesus and to disciple them in His Name. The sad thing is to see a man or woman who gave great promise of being a power for God in the world, fizzle out and become an extinct volcano. The reason being that a rational common sense explana-

tion of holy things has ruthlessly torn down the great scriptural idea of the heart of the life, and the life has withered and become a negligible quantity from God's standpoint.

Thank God for the words of Our Lord – 'He that believeth on Me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water.' Always remain true to the Fountain-head.

MISSIONARY MUNITIONS

The Minister of Munitions in this country has said (i.e., during the Great War) that everything depends on the workshops of Britain. What is true in an enormous world crisis of war is symbolically true in work for God. But what are the workshops that supply the munitions for God's enterprises? They are spiritual not carnal (see 2 Cor. x. 4), but they are workshops for all that. The workshop of missionary munitions is the hidden personal worshipping life of the saint.

(1) Worshipping as Occasion Serves. John 1. 48. The constant private habit of the life of the missionary ought to be worshipping as occasion serves, that is the first great essential for fitness. The time comes when there is no more 'fig tree' life possible; when it is all out in the open and in the glare of the work, and we will find ourselves without any value then if we have not been worshipping God as occasion serves us. We imagine we would be all right if a big crisis arose; but the big crisis will only reveal the stuff we are made of, it will not put anything into us. 'If God gives the call, of course, I will rise to the occasion.' We will not, unless we have risen to the occasion in the workshop. If we are not the real article before God there, doing the duty that lies nearest, instead of being revealed as fit for God when the crisis comes, we will be revealed as unfit. Crises always reveal character,

and we are all ignorant of our true character until it is revealed to us.

If you do not worship as occasion serves at home, you will be of no use in the foreign field, but if you put the worship of God first, i.e., get the revelation of who God is to you, then when the call comes you will be ready for it, because in the private unseen life under the fig tree, the life which no one saw but God, you have been learning and preparing, and now when the strain comes you are perfectly fit to be relied on by God. Worshipping is greater than work in that it absorbs work.

'And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.' Our Lord is the One in whom God and man can meet as one. If that has never been learned in our private worshipping life, it will never be realised in active public work. 'There is no need to have this private worship of God, I cannot be expected to live the sanctified life in the circumstances I am in; there is no time for praying just now, no time for Bible reading, when I get out into the work and the opportunity comes for all that, of course I shall be all right.' If you have not been worshipping as occasion serves, you will not only be useless yourself when you get out into service but a tremendous hindrance to those who are associated with you. Imagine a general making ammunition in a workshop at the back of the trenches, his men would be blown up whilst attempting it. Yet that is what we seem to expect to do in work for God.

(2) Ministering as Opportunity Surrounds. John xiii. 14-15. Ministering as opportunity surrounds, does not mean selecting our surroundings, but being very selectly God's in any haphazard surroundings He may engineer for us. The characteristics we exhibit in our immediate surroundings are an indication of what we will be like in other circumstances by and bye.

'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God . . .' – we might have expected the record to go on: 'He was transfigured before them'; but we read that the next thing Our Lord did was of the most menial commonplace order – He 'took a towel and began to wash the disciples' feet.' Can we use a towel as Our Lord did? Towels and basins and feet and sandals, all the ordinary sordid things of our lives, reveal quicker than anything what we are made of. It is not the big occasions that reveal us, but the little occasions. It takes God Incarnate to do the most menial commonplace things properly.

'If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.' Our Lord did not say: 'I have been the means of the salvation of thousands, I have been most successful in My service, now you go and do the same thing' – He said: '*I have washed your feet; you go and wash one another's feet.*' We try to get out of it by washing the feet of those who are not of our own set – we will wash the heathen's feet, the feet in the slums, but fancy washing my brother's feet, my wife's, my husband's, the feet of the minister of my church! Our Lord said – '*one another's feet.*'

Watch the humour of our Heavenly Father, it is seen in the way He brings across our path the types of person who exhibit to us what we have been like to Him. Now, He says, show that one the same love that I showed to you. If Jesus Christ has lifted us in love and in grace, we must show that love to someone else. It is of no use to say – 'Oh I will do all that sort of thing when I get out to the field.' The only way to produce the munitions for God's enterprises is to minister as opportunity surrounds us now, and God will surround us with ample opportunity of doing to others as He has done to us.

The workshop for missionary munitions on which God draws for His work is the private lives of those who have not only been saved and sanctified by Him, but who immediately begin to minister where they are. We read of Peter's wife's mother that when Jesus touched her, 'immediately she arose and ministered unto them.' A perfect and complete deliverance, and immediate service. There was no interesting convalescent stage. Some people do not like to get saved all of a sudden, they do not like to have their problems solved in a lightning flash, they prefer to be a spiritual sponge and mop up all the sympathy they can. Peter's wife's mother is the type of the life in which God has done His work. In the full and amazing strength of God she arose and did what lay nearest and went on as if she had never been ill.

(3) Graduating as Obligations Separate. Matthew xi. 28-29. Verse 29 – 'Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me,' is the graduating course

in the training school of Our Lord. Many of us get as far as v. 28 – 'Come unto Me,' then come the obligations which separate us from all else, and we have to enter into the discipline of fellowship. We have to take His yoke on us, and to see that we bow our neck to no other yoke but His, then when the strain comes we can go through anything.

'Learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart.' We say readily – 'Of course Jesus was meek and lowly,' but was He? Read the account of the cleansing of the Temple ; where is the meek and mild and gentle Jesus there? 'He made Himself of no reputation' – but once touch His Father's honour and all is different. The meekness and lowliness of Our Lord is seen in His relationship to His Father, He never murmured at anything His Father brought, He never gave way to self-pity. That is the meekness and lowliness of heart we need to learn, and we will never learn it unless the Redemption of Our Lord has been at work in us, completely restoring and emancipating us, and getting us into yoke with Him. If we have taken His yoke upon us, we will never say when things are difficult – 'Why should this happen to me?' We will be meek towards God's dispensations for us as Jesus was meek towards His Father.

'And ye shall find rest unto your souls,' i.e., you will make the continual discovery of the undisturbedness of heart which is the delight of those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

The workshop of missionary munitions is the temple of the Holy Ghost – our actual bodily lives. 'Know ye not that *ye* are the temple of God?'

THE MISSIONARY'S MASTER

To have a master and to be mastered are not the same thing, but diametrically opposed. If I have the idea that I am being mastered, it is a sure proof that I have no master. If I feel in subjection to someone, then I may be sure that that someone is not the one I love. To have a master means to have one who is closer than a friend, one whom I know knows me better than I know myself, one who has fathomed the remotest abyss of my heart and satisfied it, one who brings me the secure sense that he has met and solved every perplexity of my mind – that, and nothing less, is to have a master. Jesus Christ is the Master of the missionary. The conception of mastership we get from human life is totally different from the mastership of Jesus. If I have the idea that I am being mastered by Jesus, then I am far from the relationship He wants me in to Him, viz., a relationship where He is easily Master without my conscious knowledge of it; so that all I am aware of is, that I am His to obey.

Our Lord never takes measures to make us obey Him. Our obedience is the outcome of a oneness of spirit with Him through His Redemption. That is why Our Lord, whenever He talked about discipleship, prefaced it with an 'IF' – you do not need to unless you like; but – '*If* any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself, i.e., 'deny his inde-

pendence, give up his right to himself to Me.' Our Lord is not talking about a man's position hereafter, but about being of value to Him in this order of things. Human authority always insists on obedience, Our Lord never does. He makes very clear what His standard is, and if the relation of the spirit within me is that of love to Him, then I do all He says without any hesitation. If I begin to hesitate and to debate, it is because I love someone else in competition with Him, viz., myself. The only word by which to describe mastership in experience is *love* – 'If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.'

Obedience to Jesus Christ is essential, but not compulsory; He never insists on being Master. We feel that if only He would insist, we would obey Him. But Our Lord never enforces His 'thou shalt's' and 'thou shalt not's,' He never takes means to force us to do what He says, He never coerces. In certain moods we wish He would *make* us do the thing, but He will not; and in other moods we wish He would leave us alone altogether, but He will not. If we do not keep His commandments, He does not come and tell us we are wrong, we know it, there is no getting away from it. There is no ambiguity of mind as to whether what He says is right. He never says 'you *must*,' but if we are Christians we know we must. Christianity is not a 'sanctified' anything, it is the life of Jesus manifested in our mortal flesh by the miracle of His Redemption, and that means that whenever the crisis comes, Jesus is instantly seen to be Master without a moment's hesitation. There is no debate.

'Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am' – But *is* He? The great consciousness in the mind of Our Lord is that He is our Master, and we have to get into this consciousness of His. 'Master' and 'Lord' have very little place in our spiritual vocabulary; we prefer the words 'Saviour' and 'Sanctifier' and 'Healer.' In other words, we know very little about love as Jesus revealed it. It is seen in the way we use the word 'obey.' Our use of the word implies that it is the submission of an inferior to a superior; obedience in Our Lord's use of the word is the relationship of equals, a son and father. 'Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.' Our Lord was not a servant of God, He was His *Son*. The Son's obedience as Redeemer was *because He was Son*, not in order to be Son.

(1) The Master Touch in Sickness. *The Master Physician.* 'And He touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.' (Matthew viii. 15). These words crystallise for us the revelation of Our Lord as the Master Physician. When He has touched, there is no convalescence. Unless the missionary is one who has been touched by the Master Physician, his touch may be the touch of skill but never the touch of supreme healing. When Our Lord is the Master of a disciple, He conveys His effectual touch through him.

Touch has more power even than speech to convey the personality. If some people touch us, we feel the worse for it for days; if others touch us, we live a transfigured life for days. That is a recognisable experience by us all, but we may not have

realised that it is because the touch conveys the dominating personality behind. A caress from a bad personality is incarnated hypocrisy. These are subtle indications of warning, and it is at grave peril to our own souls that we ignore them. Once break down the barriers that God creates around His children and ignore His warnings, and we shall find that the enemy will break through at the places we have broken down. If we keep in touch with the Master, He will keep us out of touch with badness.

The Master touch of Our Lord breaks the fever of self, and the life is profoundly altered. When Our Lord is the Master of a disciple, no matter where he goes, His touch comes through him all the time. 'She only touched the hem of His garment . . .' The missionary is, as it were, the hem of His garment, and His virtue goes out through the garment's hem to the needy one who touches Him.

(2) The Master Touch in Sightlessness. *The Master Artist.* 'Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.' (Matthew ix. 29). The Master touch that produces sight.

In human sight the thing we soon lose is what Ruskin called 'the innocence of the eye.' An artist records exactly from this 'innocence' of sight, he does not bring in his logical faculties and interfere with what he sees by telling himself what he ought to see. Most of us know what we are looking at, and instead of trusting the 'innocence' of sight, we confuse it by trying to tell ourselves what we see. If ever you have been taught by anyone to *see*, you will know what is meant. Drummond says that

Ruskin taught him to *see*. An artist does not tell us what he sees, he enables us to see; he communicates the unutterable identity of what he sees. It is a great thing to see *with* anyone. Jesus never tells us what to see, but when His touch is upon our eyes, we know that we see what He is seeing, He restores this pristine innocence of sight. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God.'

An artist conveys his personality by means of his medium and creates wonderful things, and if the Master touch has given the missionary his sight, God can do wonderful things through him. Paul was sent by God to '*open men's eyes*, and to turn them from darkness to light.'

A skilled artist does not need to use more than two or three colours; an amateur requires all the tubes in his box squirted out like a condensed rainbow. The Master Artist used strange things to open blind eyes, e.g., spittle, clay, and pool water – but remember *He* used them – and He produced His miracle of sight. The missionary may easily be looked on as one of the despised things, but if Jesus uses him, he will produce sight in men.

(3) The Master Touch in Hearing. *The Master Musician*. 'And He touched his ear, and healed him.' (Luke xxii. 51). When the Master touch comes on the sick or the sightless or the deaf, the miracle of His personality is conveyed at once. Touch conveys the personality to the flesh and to the sight, and sound conveys the personality to the hearing. It is personality that gives sound, which is un-moral, its moral or immoral character. There is some music, for instance, that you listen to at the

peril of your soul because of the personality behind it. Better by far be unmusical than listen to it. The one who is healed by the Master Musician has the personality of God conveyed to him. When we have been ravished with the wonder of the Master Musician's music, He gives us a badly tuned instrument to put into repair for Him.

(4) The Master Touch in Speech. *The Master Speaker.* 'And He took him aside from the multitude . . and touched his tongue; . . ' (Mark vii. 33-35).

This incident is one of many that reveal the unique use of speech by Our Lord. 'And looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.' The tongue got to its right place in Our Lord because He only used it to speak the words of God, He never spoke from His right to Himself. 'The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.' The words Jesus spoke were the exact expression of the thought of God. 'And the Word was God.' The Master Speaker, after conveying His life to us by means of His words, turns us loose into a tower of Babel and tells us to speak His messages there. The missionary is one whom Jesus has taken aside from the multitude, put His fingers into his ears and touched his tongue, and who has gone straight forth hearing his Master, with his own tongue loosed and his speech plain to speak 'all the words of this life.'

These are indications of the conditions of actual Christian work. The missionary who looks for ideal conditions is in need of salvation.

THE MISSIONARY'S WAY

'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' —John xiv. 6

No matter how far we may drift, we must always come back to this verse. 'I am the Way' – not a road we leave behind us, but the Way itself. Jesus Christ is the Way *of God*, not a road that leads to God; that is why He says – 'Come unto *Me;*' 'abide in *Me.*' 'I am the Truth' – not the truth about God, not a set of principles, but the Truth itself. Jesus Christ is the Truth *of God*. 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.' We can get to God as Creator in other ways, but no man can come to God as Father in any other way than by Jesus (Matthew xi. 27). 'I am the Life.' Jesus Christ is the Life *of God* as He is the Way and the Truth of God. Eternal life is not a gift from God, but the gift *of God*, it is Himself. The life which is imparted to me by Jesus is the life of God. 'He that hath the Son hath life;' 'I am come that they might have life;' 'and this is life eternal that they might know Thee.' We have to abide in the Way; to be incorporated into the Truth; to be infused by the Life.

(1) The Conditions of the Way. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' (Phil. ii. 5.) Paul instantly goes on to state the characteristics of the mind which we are to form, viz., the mind which was in Christ Jesus when He was on this earth – utterly self-effaced and self-emptied – not the mind of Christ when He was in glory. We

receive the Spirit of Christ as a gift, but we do not receive His mind, we have to construct that, and we construct it in the way that we construct the natural mind, i.e., by the way our disposition reacts when we come in contact with external things. Mind, or soul, is the way the personal spirit expresses itself in the body. We have to lose our own way of thinking and to form Jesus Christ's way. 'Acquire your soul with patience.' It takes time and discipline. When we are regenerated and have the life of the Son of God in us, God engineers circumstances in order that we may form the mind of Christ.

(*a*) *Of Exaltation.* – 'Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' Our Lord's exaltation was His equality with the Father. There are stages of experience in the Christian life that are exalted, times when we know what it is to live in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, when we seem to be more on the mount than anywhere else. But we are not made for the mountain, we are made for the valley; we are not made for the ideal world but for the actual world, but to be so in communion with the ideal that we can work it out in the actual and make it real. There is no life like the life of a missionary for bringing the ideal and the actual together. 'Come unto Me,' said Jesus, 'and I will give you rest,' i.e., I will bring the ideal and the actual into one.

(*b*) *Of Subordination.* – Our Lord made Himself of no reputation, that is, He annihilated from Himself His former exaltation and 'took on Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men . . . He humbled Himself and became obedient

unto death.' Our Lord by His own choice emptied Himself of all His former position of glory; and if we are to enter into fellowship with Him we will deliberately have to go through the annihilation – not of glory, but of our former right to ourselves in every shape and form. Our Lord's former condition was one of absolute equality with God: our former condition was one of absolute independence of God. In the case of the disciple it is not oneness with God that is to be counted as loss, but our former independence of God. 'Let him deny himself,' says Jesus. It is easy to do it in theory, easy to *count* all things but loss, but Paul says he not only counted all things but loss but he '*suffered* the loss of all things' that he might win Christ. It is a sad thing to only get the length of counting the loss – to say, 'Oh yes, I see it will cost me my right to myself, it will cost me the world, it will cost me everything, but I do not intend to experience the loss; these things sound all right in the ideal, but they hit a bit too hard in the actual.'

(*c*) *Of Sanctification.* – 'For their sakes I sanctify Myself.' The idea of sanctification as Our Lord uses it here is the separation of holiness to God's use and for God's purpose. Our Lord separated His holy self to God. That idea of sanctification worked out in a missionary's life means more than the fact that he is personally identified with his Lord, it means that he deliberately sets his sanctified self apart for God. The experience of sanctification is usually presented as a personal identification with Jesus Christ in which He is made unto us sanctification, but the sanctification Our Lord refers to is

the sanctification of that sanctification. Beware of the idea that makes a man say – 'Now I am sanctified I can do what I like.' If he does, he is immoral. Even Christ pleased not Himself. If the experience of sanctification ends in pious sentiment, the reason is that it has never dawned on the sanctified one that he must set himself apart deliberately for God's use as Jesus did.

(2) The Commission of the Way. 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you' (John xx. 21). Our Lord's first obedience was not to the needs of men, not to the consideration of where He was most useful, but to the will of His Father. 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.' And the first obedience of the missionary is to the will of his Lord. 'Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am' – but how much more does it mean to us than the mere saying of it? 'If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet,' and that cannot be done by sentiment. Jesus will not insist on our doing it, but He says – 'If I am your Lord and Master, you will exhibit to others the love I have exhibited to you.' It was in the hour when Jesus knew 'that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God' that He washed the disciple's feet; and it is when we realise our union with Jesus as our Lord and Master that we will follow His example. It takes God Incarnate to do the meanest duty as it ought to be done. When Jesus touched the things that were sordid and ordinary, He transfigured them.

(*a*) *The Witness.* – John viii. 18-19, xv. 27. Our

Lord as a witness was One who satisfied His Father, and a Christian witness is one who satisfies his Master. 'Ye shall be witnesses unto Me,' not witnesses to what I can do, but witnesses who satisfy Me in any circumstances I put you in – I reckon on you for extreme service, with no complaining on your part and no explanation on Mine. Being a witness involves martyrdom, although being a martyr does not necessarily involve being a witness.

(*b*) *The Word.* – John xiv. 10, xvii. 8. Our Lord says that His word was not His own but His Father's. 'The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself,' i.e., Jesus never spoke from His right to Himself. Jesus Christ is the word of God in His own Person, He spoke the words of God with a human tongue, and He has given to His disciples the words the Father gave to Him. The disciple has not only to speak the words of God with his tongue but to bear the evidence of being a word of the Son, as Jesus was the word of God. To 'confess' Christ means to say not only with the tongue but with every bit of the life that Jesus has come in our flesh. As the Son was the exact expression of the Father, so the saint must be an exact expression of the Son, and He sends us as the Father sent Him.

(*c*) *The Work.* – John ix. 4, xiv. 12. 'I must work the works of Him that sent Me. . . .' According to Our Lord, the need is never the call. The need is the opportunity; the call is the call of God. The call of God is like the call of the sea, or of the mountains, or of the ice-fields, no one hears those calls who has not the nature of the sea or of the mountains or of the ice-fields in him; and no one hears the call

of God who has not the nature of the Almighty in him. If we have received the nature of God, then we begin slowly to discern what it is God wants us to do. Never have the idea that our discernment of the need is the call. The need is the opportunity which will prove whether we will be worthy of the call. We have no right because we realise a need, to say – 'I must go;' if we are sanctified, we cannot go unless we are sent.

(3) The Conflict of the Way. 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.' (John xv. 18). Our Lord told His disciples over and over again that they must lay their account with the hatred of the world.

(*a*) *Of Contrast.* – Matthew x. 16. In this verse Our Lord gives the vivid contrast of sheep and wolves, of doves and serpents, and He uses the contrast in a particular connection, viz., that of proclaiming His Gospel.

(*b*) *Of Contumely.* – Matthew x. 17-20. If these verses are unfamiliar to us to-day, it is because we are out of the centre of identification with Our Lord's purposes and are seeking to bring Him into our enterprises; but as surely as we are in fellowship with Him, we will find the terrible and unpalatable truth expressed in these verses a very actual portion.

(*c*) *Of Courage.* – Matthew x. 22-24. The courage Our Lord alludes to here is that born in a heart in vivid relationship to Himself, compelling the body to perform the will of God even at the cost of death. Our Lord makes little of physical death, but He makes much of moral and spiritual death.

(4) The Consolations of the Way. 'I will not

leave you comfortless. I will come to you.' John xiv. 18. The consolations of the ways are not the sympathies of human sensibilities, but the great sustainings of the personal Holy Ghost.

(*a*) *Of Love.* – John xvii. 26. The first mighty name for the consolations of the way is Love – 'that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them,' i.e., the nature of God as exhibited in Jesus, with its impenetrable reserves. It is the Holy Ghost who brings this consolation, He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. No human being can pump up what is not there. The consolation of love is not that of exquisite human understanding, it is the real nature of God holding the individual life in effectual rectitude and effectual communion in the face of anything that may ever come.

(*b*) *Of Joy.* – John xv. 11. Joy is not happiness, joy is the result of the perfect fulfilment of the purpose of the life. We never want praise if we have done perfectly what we ought to do; we only want praise if we are not sure we have done well. Jesus did not want praise; He did not need it. 'That My joy might remain in you.' The joy of Jesus was in the absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice of Himself to His Father, the joy of doing what the Father sent Him to do – 'I delight to do Thy will,' and that is the joy He prays may be in His disciples. It is not a question of trying to work as Jesus did, but of the personal presence of the Holy Ghost Who works in us the nature of Jesus, it is the fathomless joy of the Holy Ghost manifesting itself in us as it did in the Son of God in the days of His flesh.

(*c*) *Of Peace.* – John xiv. 27. The peace Jesus refers to here is not the peace of a conscience at rest, but the peace that characterised His own life. 'My peace I give unto you.' His peace is a direct gift through the personal presence of the Holy Ghost.

(5) THE CONSUMMATION OF THE WAY. 'We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.' (John xiv. 23.) Jesus says that the relationship between the Father and the Son is to be the relationship between the Father and the Son and the sanctified soul.

(*a*) *Oneness.* – John xvii. 22. 'That they also may be One in Us.' Are we as close to Jesus as that? God will not leave us alone until we are. God has one prayer that He must answer, and that is the prayer of Jesus.

(*b*) *Sovereignty.* – Matthew xix. 28-29. Peter in his Epistle says that we are to be 'a royal priesthood' (1 Peter ii. 9). The sovereignty alluded to by Peter and by Our Lord in these verses is to be a literal sovereignty ultimately as well as a spiritual sovereignty.

(*c*) *Glory.* – John xvii. 22-24. 'The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them.' What glory had Jesus when He became the Son of Man? The glory of Jesus was not external, He effaced the Godhead in Himself so effectually that men without the Spirit of God despised Him. His glory was the glory of actual holiness, and that is the glory He gives to the saint. The glory of the saint here and now is the glory of actual holiness manifested in actual life. There is a glory which the saint is only to behold – 'that they may behold My glory'

(v. 24). What is that glory? 'The glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' That is not the glory we are to share, but the glory we are to behold. 'Glory' here must be understood in the same sense as the word 'form' in Phil. ii. 6. It refers to the absolute relation of Deity which the Son of God had before He became Incarnate.

The consummation of the missionary's way is centred in John xiv. 23. 'We will come unto him and make Our abode with him.' The Triune God abiding with the saint.

MISSIONARY PREDESTINATIONS

Isaiah xlix. 1–2.

This passage refers to the whole nation of Israel, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and also to every individual saint.

(1) The Election of Perfect Fitness for God. God created the people known as Israel for one purpose, viz., to be the servant of Jehovah until every nation came to know through Israel who Jehovah was. The nation created for the service of Jehovah failed to fulfil God's predestination for them; then God called out a remnant, and the remnant failed; then out of the remnant came One who succeeded, the One whom we know as the Lord Jesus Christ. The Saviour of the world came of that nation. He is called 'the Servant of God' because He fits on exactly with the creative purpose of God for the historic people of God. Through that one Man the purpose of God for the individual, for the chosen nation, and for the whole world will be fulfilled. It is through Him that we are made 'a royal priesthood.'

When this election to God in Christ Jesus is realised by us individually, God begins to destroy

our prejudices and our parochial notions and to turn us into the servants of His own purpose. The experience of salvation in individual lives means the incoming of this realisation of the election of God. When we are born from above, we understand what is incomprehensible to human reason, viz., that the predestinations of God and our infinitesimal lives are by Him made one and the same. From the standpoint of rationalism, that is nonsense; but it is revelation fact. The connection between the election of God and human free will is confusing to our Gentile type of mind, but the connection was an essential element underlying all Hebrew thought. The predestinations of God cannot be experienced by individuals of their own free choice, but when we are born again the fact that we do choose what has been predestined of God comes to us as a revelation. The rationalist says it is absurd to imagine that the purposes of Almighty God are furthered by an individual life, but it is true. God's predestinations are the sanctified soul's voluntary choosing. One way in which the realisation works out to us personally is when we say – 'The Lord led me here.' The detailed guidance of God is a literal truth in the individual lives of saints. Our relation to the election of God is the one thing to be concerned over. Consequently the need can never be the call; the call is of God, and the engineering of our circumstances is of God, not on the ground of our usefulness. The call of God relates us to the purpose of God.

(*a*) *The Purpose of the Missionary's Creation.* – 'He hath . . . made me . . .' The first thing God does

with us after sanctification is to 'force through the channels of a single heart' the interests of the whole world, by introducing into us the nature of the Holy Ghost. The nature of the Holy Ghost is the nature of the Son of God; the nature of the Son of God is the nature of Almighty God, and the nature of Almighty God is focussed in John iii. 16. When we are born from above the realisation dawns that we are built for God, not for ourselves, 'He hath made me.' We are brought by the means of new birth into the individual realisation of God's great purpose for the human race, and all our small, miserable, parochial notions disappear.

If we have been living much in the presence of God, the first thing that strikes us is the immense smallness of the lives of men and women who do not recognise God. It did not occur to us before. Their lives seemed to be broad and generous, but now there seems such a fuss of interests that have nothing whatever to do with God's purpose, they are altogether unrelated to the election of God. It is because people live in the things they possess, instead of in their relationship to God, that God at times seems to be cruel. There are a thousand and one interests that God's providential hand has to brush aside as hopelessly irrelevant to His purpose, and if we have been living in those interests, we go with them (cf. Luke xii. 15).

'The Lord hath called me from the womb.' In this rugged phrase Isaiah declares the creative purpose of God for Israel and Judah. Creation has the opposite meaning to selection. The essential pride of Israel and Judah (and of the Pharisees

in Our Lord's day) was that God was obliged to select them because of their superiority to other nations. God did not *select* them: God *created* them for one purpose, viz., to be His bondslaves.

There were no nations until after the flood. After the flood the human race was split up into nations, and God called off one stream of the human race in Abraham, and created a nation out of that one man (see Genesis xii. 2, *et seq*). The Old Testament is not a history of the nations of the world, but the history of that one nation. In secular history Israel is disregarded as merely a miserable horde of slaves, and justly so from the standpoint of the historian. The nations to which the Bible pays little attention are much finer to read about, but they have no importance in the Redemptive purpose of God. His purpose was the creation of a nation to be His bondslave, and that through that nation all the other nations should come to know Him. It is wrong to have the idea that Israel was a magnificently developed type of nation. Israel was a despised, and a despisable nation, continually turning away from God and going into idolatry; but nothing ever altered the purpose of God for the nation. The despised element is always a noticeable element in the purpose of God. When the Saviour of the world came, He came of that despised nation; He Himself was 'despised and rejected of men,' and in all Christian enterprise there is this same despised element – '. . . things that are despised hath God chosen.'

The realisation by regeneration of the election of God and of being made thereby perfectly fit

for Him is the most joyful realisation on earth. When we are born from above we *realise* the election of God, our regeneration does not *create* it. Once we realise that through the salvation of Jesus we are made perfectly fit for God, we understand why Jesus is apparently so ruthless, why He demands such absolute rectitude from the saint. He has given him the very nature of God.

The creative purpose of God for the missionary is to make him His servant, one in whom He is glorified. Once we realise this, all our self-conscious limitations will be extinguished in the extraordinary blaze of all that the Redemption of Jesus Christ means. We have to see that we keep the windows of our soul open to the creative purpose of God for us, and not confuse His purpose with our own intentions. Every time we do, God has to crush them, to push them on one side, no matter how it hurts, because they are on the wrong line. We must beware lest we forget God's purpose for our life.

(2) The Election of Perfect Finish for God. God has elected a certain nation to be His bond-slave, and through that nation a knowledge of His salvation is to come to all the world. The history of that nation is a record of awful idolatry and backsliding, they remained true to neither prophet nor God Himself; but in spite of everything the fulfilment of God's purpose for the nation of His choice is certain. The election of the nation by God was not for the salvation of individuals; the elect nation was to be the instrument of salvation to the whole world. The story of their distress is due entirely to their deliberate determination to use

themselves for another purpose than God's. The beginning of their corruption was their desire to have a king and to be like other nations – 'Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.' Whenever Israel sought to use themselves for their own purposes, God smashed those purposes up. We must be careful not to confuse the predestination of God by making His election include every individual; to have the idea that because God elected a certain nation through whom His salvation was to come, that therefore every individual of that nation is elected to salvation. The history of the elect nation disproves this, but that did not alter God's purpose for the nation. The individuals of the elect nation have to be saved in the same way as the individuals of nations that have not been elected. Election refers to the unchangeable purpose of God, not to the salvation of individuals. Each individual has to choose which line of predestination he will take – the devil's line or God's line. Individual position is determined by individual choice, but that is neither here nor there in connection with God's purpose for the human race. Individuals enter into the realisation of the creative purpose of God for the human race by being born again of the Spirit; but we must not make the predestination of God for the race to include every individual any more than God's predestination for the elect nation included every individual. Salvation is of universal application, but human responsibility is not done away with.

The purpose of God for man is that he should

'glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.' Sin has switched the human race off on to another line, but it has not altered God's purpose for the human race in the tiniest degree. The election of the perfect fitness of the human race for God is abiding. It is exhibited in the Man Christ Jesus, and that is the ideal the human race is destined to reach in spite of all that sin and the devil can do – the 'measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' As Son of Man, Jesus Christ mirrors what the human race is to be like on the basis of Redemption. Sin and the devil may do their worst, but it does not alter God's purpose, saving to make manifest His purpose all the more gloriously (Romans v. 12-21).

(*a*) *Preparation of the Missionary's Characteristic.* – 'He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.' The outstanding characteristic of the ancient people of God, of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the missionary, is the 'prophet' or preaching characteristic. In the Old Testament the prophet's calling is placed above that of king and of priest. It is the lives of the prophets that prefigure the Lord Jesus Christ. The character of the prophet is essential to his work. The characteristic of God's elective purpose in the finished condition of His servant is that of preaching. 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.'

Notice the emphasis that the New Testament places on 'confessing,' on 'preaching' and on 'testifying,' all expressive of this perfect finish for God. And notice too that it is this characteristic that Satan attacks. He is at the back of the movement abroad to-day which advocates living a holy life, but 'don't

talk about it.' Men never suffer because they live a godly life, they suffer for their speech. Humanly speaking, if Our Lord had held His tongue, He would not have been put to death. 'If I had not come *and spoken unto them*, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin.' Never despise this characteristic of perfect finish for God.

A saint is made by God, 'He made me,' then do not tell God He is a bungling workman. We do that whenever we say 'I can't.' To say 'I can't' literally means we are too strong in ourselves to depend on God. 'I can't pray in public; I can't talk in the open air.' Substitute 'I won't,' and it will be nearer the truth. The thing that makes us say 'I can't' is that we forget that we must rely entirely on the creative purpose of God and on His perfect finish.

Much of our difficulty comes because we choose our own work – 'Oh well, this is what I am fitted for.' Remember that Jesus took a fisherman and turned him into a shepherd. That is symbolical of what He does all the time. Indoor work has to do with civilisation, we were created for out-of-door work, both naturally and spiritually. The idea that we have to consecrate our gifts to God is a dangerous one. We cannot consecrate what is not ours (see 1 Cor. iv. 7). We have to consecrate ourselves, and leave our gifts alone. God does not ask us to do the thing that is easy to us naturally; He only asks us to do the thing we are perfectly fitted to do by grace, and the cross will come along that line always.

(3) The Election of Perfect Fittedness to

God. Israel is still in the shadow of God's hand, in spite of all her wickedness. God's purposes are always fulfilled, no matter how wide a compass may be taken first by His permission.

(*a*) *The Plan of the Missionary's Concentration.* – 'In the shadow of His hand hath He hid me.' As applied to the saint, this phrase refers to the experience when we come to know, not with a sigh, but with deepest satisfaction, 'in all the world there is none but Thee, my God, there is none but Thee.' The shadow of God's hand may seem to be the cruellest, most appalling shadow that ever fell on human life, but we will find what the disciples found – 'they feared as they entered the cloud . . . and suddenly they saw Jesus only with themselves.' Never misunderstand the shadow of God's hand. When He leaves us alone it is assuredly to lead us into the inner meaning of Phil. iii. 10 – 'That I may know Him.' The stern discipline that looks like distress and chastisement turns out to be the biggest benediction, it is the shadow of God's hand, and it is the shadow of God's hand that keeps us perfectly fitted in Him.

The kindness and the generosity of God is known when once we get under the shadow of His hand. We may kick if we like, fume if we like and the fingers will hurt; but when we stop kicking, the fingers caress. Through the shadow of bereavement I got to know God better, is a different thing from saying that God took away my child because I loved him too much. That is a lie and contrary to what Jesus revealed God to be, that He is love. If there is a dark line in God's face to us, the

solution is not to say what is not true to fact, but to bow our head and wait, the explanation is not yet. All that is dark and obscure just now will one day be as radiantly and joyously clear as the bit of truth we do know about God. No wonder our Lord's counsel is 'Fear not.'

THE MISSIONARY GOAL

In natural life we have ambitions and aims which alter as we develop; in the Christian life the goal is given at the beginning, viz., Our Lord Himself. 'Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' We do not start with our idea of what the Christian life should be, we start with Christ, and we end with Christ. Our aims in natural life continually shift and alter as we develop, but development in the Christian life is an increasing manifestation of Jesus Christ.

(1) Companionship with His Goal. Luke xviii. 31-34. 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.' That is not the language of a martyr living beyond his dispensation; Our Lord is not foreseeing with the vision of a highly sensitive nature that His life must end in disaster, He states over and over again that He came on purpose to die. 'From that time began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.' (Matthew xvi. 21). The Scriptures leave no room for the idea that Our Lord was a martyr (cf. Luke xxiv. 25-27). Jerusalem stands in the life of Our Lord as the place where He reached the climax of His Father's will.

This word of our Lord's is taken as exhibiting the missionary goal, 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem,'

and unless we go with Him there, we shall have no companionship with Him. The New Testament centres round one Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are regenerated into His Kingdom by means of His Cross, and then we go up to our Jerusalem having His Life as our example. We must be born from above before we can go up to our Jerusalem, and the things He met with on His way will throw a flood of light on the things we shall meet with. Our Jerusalem means the place where we reach the climax of Our Lord's will for us, and that is that we may be made one with Him as He is one with the Father. The aim of the missionary is not to win the heathen, not to be useful, but to do God's will. He *does* win the heathen, and he *is* useful, but that is not his aim; his aim is to do the will of his Lord.

(2) Considering His Facing of the Way. Luke ix. 51-55. 'He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.'

The set purpose of Our Lord's life was to do the will of His Father; that was His dominating interest all through. He went on His way to Jerusalem unhasting and unresting, not hurrying through the villages where they 'did not receive Him, because His face was as though He was going to Jerusalem,' nor loitering in those villages where they welcomed Him. Our danger is to be deflected by the things we meet with on the way to our Jerusalem – 'I am so misunderstood and so persecuted here that I must get away : or, this is where I am so useful that I must stay awhile.'

Ambition means a set purpose for the attainment

of our own ideal, and as such it is excluded from the Kingdom of Our Lord. After the disciples had disputed who among them should be the greatest, Jesus took a little child in His arms and said – 'Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' The nature of the Kingdom of Heaven is revealed in the implicit nature of a child who does not work according to a set ambition, but obeys the simple law of his nature. If we are children of God, the simple law of our nature is the Holy Ghost, Whose one set purpose is the glorification of Jesus, and He pays no attention to our secular notions or to our religious notions.

Are we entering into competition with the purpose of the Holy Ghost by having purposes and ambitions of our own? As we face the way to our Jerusalem we must adhere to the set purpose of the Holy Ghost, which is to glorify Jesus, and not be deflected by the pride of those who reject us because of that purpose, nor be deterred by the prejudices of those in the same way with us. We must consider *Him*, and go up to Jerusalem *with Him*. The 'one thing' in the life of the apostle Paul was not an ambition, it was a set purpose born of the Holy Ghost in him.

(3) Comparing His Faring on the Way. Luke xiii. 22-35. 'And He went on His way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on unto Jerusalem.' (v. 22.)

Our Lord was not fanatical. Had He been a fanatic, He would have said – 'Because I am going up to Jerusalem there is no need to stay in this village or that, I have only one duty, and that is to go up to Jerusalem.' Our Lord took plenty of time

to do His duty in the cities and villages He went through on His way up to Jerusalem. Nothing made Him hurry through the villages where He was persecuted, or linger in those where He was blessed.

vv. 31-33. Our Lord met deceit on His way to Jerusalem, but it did not deter Him from His set purpose.

vv. 34-35. Our Lord also realised desperate distress on His way, but nothing caused Him to swerve one hair's breadth from the set purpose of God.

As workers for God we shall meet with deceit and with distress on our way to Jerusalem, for 'the disciple is not above his Master.' It is true of the Master that 'He shall not fail nor be discouraged.' In the intimate circle of Our Lord's own disciples there was one whom He called a devil, but He never allowed that to deter Him or to discourage Him.

Various things will make us forget to do our duty, e.g., excess of joy (see Acts xii. 12). In the excitement of a revival we get so taken up with joy that we forget the home duties and everything else.

(4) Contemplating His Findings on the Way. Luke xvii. 11-19. 'And it came to pass, as they were on their way to Jerusalem . . . there met Him ten men that were lepers . . .'

Our Lord met ingratitude on His way to Jerusalem – 'Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine?' But it did not turn Him from His purpose. We will meet the same thing on the way to our Jerusalem, there will be people who get blessed and one or two will show gratitude, and the rest gross

ingratitude. Never allow this feeling to come in – 'Well, I am going to do no more for that one, I did everything I could for him and all I got was gross ingratitude.' If once that sentiment comes in, it will deflect us from going up to our Jerusalem. We are not here to serve our own purpose; we are here, by the grace of God and by His indwelling Spirit, to glorify our Lord and Master. If He brings us up against callous people, mean, ungrateful, sponging people, it must never turn our face for one second from our Jerusalem. The turning of the face from our Jerusalem is a temper of mind in which Jesus cannot be glorified.

We have to learn to go the second mile with God. Some of us get played out in the first ten yards because God compels us to go where we cannot see the way, and we think we will wait until we get nearer the big crisis. We can all see the big crisis, and we say, 'Oh yes, I would like to do that for God,' but what about the obscure duty waiting to be done? If we do not do the walking steadily and carefully in the little matters, we will do nothing when the big crisis comes. We flag when there is no vision, no uplift, just the common round, the trivial task; but if we keep our faces steadfastly set towards our Jerusalem and go there considering *Him*, it will not be possible for drudgery to damp us.

(5) Concerning His Finishing on the Way. Luke xix. 11-28. 'And He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem.' As Our Lord drew near to His Cross, the disciples became more and more perplexed, until at last, at the end of three years of the most intimate contact

with Him, they said 'What is it that He saith unto us? We know not what He saith.' After the Resurrection, Our Lord breathed on them and said – 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit,' and their eyes were opened and they knew Him, and they knew the Scriptures. If we try to get 'head first' into what Our Lord teaches, we shall exhibit the same stupidity as the disciples did, until we receive the Holy Spirit and learn to rely on Him, and to interpret the words of Jesus as He brings them to our mind.

(6) Consummating His Fulfilment at the Goal. Luke xxiii. 'There they crucified Him.' That is what happened to Our Lord when He reached Jerusalem, and that 'happening' is the gateway to our salvation. By His death on the Cross Our Lord made the way for every son of man to get into communion with God. The saints do not end in crucifixion; by the Lord's grace, they end in glory. In the meantime the missionary's watchword is 'Behold, I too go up to Jerusalem.'

(1) Scheme of Enterprise. 'Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Psalm ii. 8.

The emphasis in this Psalm and all through the Bible is that missionary enterprise is God's thought, not man's. We do not know, apart from the Spirit of God, what God's purpose is. The problems surrounding work in the mission field, and any branch of Christian work, are too big to be coped with by man's intellect alone, and yet the humblest saint in communion with God works out God's answer to every problem, for the most part unconsciously to himself. To attempt to understand the problems that are pressing on the shores of Christian work to-day at home and abroad, apart from God, will result in an absolute bewilderment of mind and spirit. It all comes back to one point, viz., a personal relationship to God in Christ Jesus. There is nothing simple in the human soul or in human life. There is only one thing that is simple, and that is the relationship of the individual soul to God, the 'simplicity that is in Christ.' In work for God it is not sufficient to be awake to the need, to be in earnest, to want to do something; it is necessary to prove from every standpoint, moral, intellectual and spiritual, that the only place to live in is in a personal relationship to God. It is the individual men and

women living a life rooted and grounded in God, who are fulfilling God's purpose in the world.

The great Author and Originator of all missionary enterprise is God, and we must keep in touch with His line. The call to the missionary does not arise out of the discernment of his own mind, or from the sympathy of his own heart, but because behind the face of every distorted, downtrodden heathen, he sees the face of Jesus Christ, and hears His command –'Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations.' The need of the heathen world can only be met by our Risen Lord, Who has all power in heaven and in earth, and by our receiving from Him the enduement of power from on High. We have to see that we conserve the energy of regenerating grace planted in us by the Holy Ghost through the Atonement, so that wherever we go the rivers of living water will flow through our lives.

In all ages, from the start of God's work, His plan has seemed a forlorn hope, as if He were being worsted, and all the arguments seem to be in favour of other lines – the line of educating, of healing, of civilising. Those are the 'birds' which come and lodge in the branches, and men are saying that the present manifestation of civilisation is the outcome of Christianity. '*This*,' they say, 'is Christianity, this is the real thing, these educational forces, these healing and civilising forces. This is what missions ought to be doing and not going off on the line of personal sanctification or of devotion to Jesus, we have grown out of all that. We must devote ourselves to the things we can see; we must educate and train these benighted races and introduce our wider,

better views, and in that way the Kingdom of God will come in.' This is not God's way. God will bring in His Kingdom in His own way. Jesus says that in this dispensation 'the Kingdom of God is within you without observation.' All these civilising forces have been allowed to lodge in the branches of the spiritual tree of Christianity, whilst the Life that makes them possible is not recognised. They receive shelter from that which they are not themselves, and men's eyes are blinded to the real issue. It is astounding where men will get to when once they leave the humble stand of a life hid with Christ in God.

(2) SPIRITUAL EVANGELISATION. 'And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.' Ezekiel xxxvi. 23.

The first purpose of missionary enterprise is evangelistic, and the evangel is that of personal sanctification. A missionary and a Christian ought to be one and the same, and a Christian is one who is united to his Lord by a living union of character. It is easy to arouse enthusiasm along other lines (medical, educational, industrial), and on the ground that wherever Christianity is made known, social development goes on. This is true, but these things are altogether secondary. The first aim of missionary enterprise is the spiritual evangelisation of the people, and the missionary must be united to Jesus by the spiritual bond of sanctification before he can really evangelise others. Wherever a Christian is placed, he must work out the sanctified life. We have to beware of the notion that spirituality is

something divorced from contact with sordid realities. The one and only test of a spiritual life is practical reality. When a missionary's life is taken and placed down under the black night of heathenism, there is only one thing that can stand there, and that is the sanctification wrought by God, viz., his personal union with Jesus Christ, and the realisation that he is there for one purpose only, to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

If missionary enthusiasm is awakened without missionary knowledge being given, men go out totally unprepared to face the conditions in heathen lands, and every hour of the day they are faced with moral problems that shock every human sensibility. Unless the call of God has been heard, and the mind and nerves are prepared to face these things from God's standpoint, the whole nature fails under the strain, and the result is either that the missionary returns home broken, or that he sinks down in oblivion on the mission field itself. We have to call ourselves up short in reading missionary books that sweep us off our feet, and see if they tally with God's purpose. It is extraordinary how few of them do. It is the needs of the heathen that are put first, the awfulness of the conditions that prevail in heathen lands. None of this constitutes the call for a missionary. The appeal is based on the command of our Lord –'Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations.' Not –'Go because the conditions of the heathen will be improved,'– they will be, but the great motive of the missionary is the command of Jesus for spiritual evangelisation. We have to guard our motive in work for God as jealously as we would

guard anything that God actually put into our hand. It needs more courage to face God with our motive in work for Him than it does to face an audience with our message. We have continually to face our own personal sanctification and our motive for service with the Lord Himself, to let His searchlight come, and to see that we remain true to Him. We are not sent to develop the races, we are sent to preach the Gospel to every creature because Our Lord has commanded it, *and for no other reason*. God's purpose is at the back of the whole thing, and His purpose is revealed by His Spirit only to sanctified souls.

To-day people are trying to better Jesus Christ's programme, and are saying that the line to take is first of all to look after men's bodies, to heal them and teach them, and then to evangelise them. It reminds one of the legend to the effect that the birds decided whichever bird should fly the highest, should be their king. Whereupon the wren got on the back of the eagle, and when the eagle soared up into the sky the little wren flew up higher still. Many modern books on missionary enterprise are like the wren on the back of the eagle, they pretend to go one better than Jesus Christ – 'His teaching was all very well for the beginning stages, but now we can go one better.'

Missionary enterprise on the line of education and healing and social amelioration is magnificent, but it is secondary, and the danger is to give it the first place. The temptation is more subtle to-day than ever it has been, because the countries of the world are being opened up as never before,

and the appeal is being made along the line of secondary importance, because it misses out the primary motive for missionary enterprise, viz., the personal sanctification of the missionary and the need to obey his Lord's command and *make disciples* of all nations. It sounds so plausible and right to say – Heal the people, teach them, put them in better surroundings, and then evangelise them; but it is fundamentally wrong. The cry 'Civilise first, and then evangelise' has honeycombed itself into missionary work in every land, and it takes the Spirit of God to show where it is in direct opposition to God's line. It is putting men's needs first, and that is the very heart and kernel of the temptation Satan brought to Our Lord. Our Lord's first obedience was not to the needs of men, but to the will of His Father. We must beware of putting anything first that Jesus does not put first. The testimony of missionaries over and over again is to the effect that once the evangelistic work is put in the second place, it is the devil who gets his way, not God. Dr. Moffatt has said that civilisation drives away the tiger but breeds the fox. That is the statement of a man after years of work in the mission field and with ample opportunity of estimating all the forces at work. The introduction of civilisation, without the emphasis on living the life hid with Christ in God, tends to increase the power of evil because it covers it with a veil of refinement.

'The heathen shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall be sanctified *in you* before their eyes.' The only reason for a Christian going into the mission field is that his own life is hid with Christ

in God, and the compulsion of the providence of God on the outside, working with the imperative call of His Spirit on the inside, has wedded itself to the command of Jesus – 'Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations.' The awakening forces spiritually will not come from the civilisations of the West, but from the lives of the hidden, lonely, obscure missionaries who have stood true to God, and the rivers of living water have come through them.

(3) Supernatural Hope for Missions. 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' (Jeremiah vi. 16.)

In looking back over centuries of missionary work, the tendency is to say –'This is where that effort failed, and this is where the other failed,' and the real reason for the failure is missed, viz., that God's ideal had been abandoned. If you talk about the need for personal sanctification to an aggressive Christian worker, he will say –'You are a dreamer, of dreams, we have to get to work and *do* something'. Whereas it is not a question of doing things, but a question of realising deep down, until there is no shadow of doubt about it, that if we are going to do anything it must be by the supernatural power of God, and not by our own ingenuity and wisdom. Holiness people are not unpractical, they are the only ones who are building on the great underlying ideal of God. Our business as workers for God is to find out what is God's ideal, to ask ourselves on what line we are doing our duty, whether we are

progressing along the line of God's ideal and working that out, or whether we are being caught up in the drift of modern views and evolving away from God's ideal. The Sermon on the Mount is the perpetual standard of measurement for those at work for God, and yet the statements of Jesus are continually being watered down, and even contradicted by many to-day. There is not the slightest use in our going to the foreign field to work for God if we are not true to His ideal at home. We will be a disgrace to Him there.

How many of us really live up to all the light we have got? If we examine ourselves before God, we will find that we dare not go one step beyond our own crowd, no matter what the Lord says. If we get any new light on God's word, or on His will for our lives, we take on the cringe of the coward – 'I wonder if the others have seen that;' or, 'Oh well, if they do not do it, I must not.' Very few of us walk up to the light we get unless someone else will go with us. For instance, notice how often Jesus Christ talks about being persecuted and cast out for His Name's sake, and we will soon see how far we have fallen away from His ideal. Even the most spiritual among us have little of the genius of the Holy Ghost in our lives. We accept the ordinary common sense ways of doing things without ever examining them in the light of God. When we do begin to re-relate our lives in accordance with God's ideal, we will encounter the scorn or the amazement or the ridicule or pity of the crowd we belong to. There are books and teachers that tell us that when God is at work in our lives, it will be manifested in

ostensible ways of blessing. Jesus says that the ostensible way in which it will work out is the way of ridicule. 'As He is, so are we in this world.' What we are hammering at is a right relationship to God first, and then the carrying out of work along God's line. Whether it be a success or a failure has nothing to do with us. Our call is not to successful service, but to faithfulness. Our Lord demands of us a personal watchful relationship to Himself, and the doing of the duty that lies nearest from that standpoint, and whether men recognise it or not, it will tell for eternity, whether we be in the home field or the foreign field. It depends on our standpoint which line we emphasise. A personal relationship to Jesus Christ first, then from that basis, as much practical work as possible. Unless the missionary is based on a right relationship to God, in the passing of the years he will fizzle out and become a negligible quantity from God's standpoint. The men and women who stand absolutely true to God's ideal are the ones who are telling for God. God has staked His honour on the work of Jesus Christ in the souls of those whom He has saved and sanctified and sent.

THE KEY TO THE MISSIONARY PROBLEM

Matthew ix. 38.

(1) The Key to the Master's Orders. 'Pray ye therefore. . . .'

The key to the missionary problem is in the hand of God, not of man, and according to Our Lord, the key is prayer, not work, as that word is popularly understood, because work may mean evading spiritual concentration. Our Lord says – '*Pray* ye therefore. . . .'

We are not speaking of the lock which the key has to open, viz., the problems of missionary enterprise, but of the *key* to those problems. That key is put into our hands by Jesus Christ, and it is not a common sense key. It is not a medical key, nor a civilising key, nor an educational key, not even an evangelical key; the key is prayer. We are challenged straight off with the difference between our view of prayer and Our Lord's view. Prayer to us is not practical, it is stupid, and until we do see that prayer is stupid – stupid, that is, from the ordinary natural common sense point of view – we will never pray. 'It is absurd to think that God is going to alter things in answer to prayer!' But that is what Jesus says He will do. It sounds stupid, but it is stupidity based on His Redemption. The reason we do not get prayers answered is that we are not stupid enough to believe what Jesus says. A child and only a child gets prayer answered, a wise and

prudent man does not. (cf. Matt. xi. 25). We have to be as natural as a child in our relationship to Jesus Christ, and He does His work all the time. Jesus Christ is our Master, and He lays down His orders very distinctly—'pray ye therefore . . .'

(*a*) *Prayer the Work.* John xiv. 12–14. We are apt to think of prayer as a common sense exercise of our higher powers in order to prepare us for work, whereas in the teaching of Jesus, prayer is not to fit us for the 'greater works,' prayer *is* the work. Prayer is the outcome of our apprehension of the nature of God, the means whereby we assimilate more and more of His mind, and the means whereby He unveils His purposes to us.

(*b*) *Prayer the Fruit.* John xv. 16. The way 'fruit' remains is by prayer. Our Lord puts prayer as the means of fruit-producing and fruit-abiding work; but, remember, it is prayer based on His agony, not on our agony. God is not impressed by our earnestness, He nowhere promises to answer prayer because of our agony in intercession, but only on the ground of Redemption. We take the crown off Redemption as the ground on which God answers prayer and put it on our own earnestness. We have 'boldness to enter into the holiest *by the blood of Jesus*,' and in no other way. Prayer is the miracle of Redemption at work in us which will produce the miracle of Redemption in the lives of others.

(*c*) *Prayer the Battle.* Eph. vi. 11–20. The armour is for the battle of prayer. Stand therefore, having on the whole armour of God, and then pray. The armour is not to fight in, but to shield us while we pray. Prayer is the battle. The reason we do

not pray is that we do not own Jesus Christ as Master, we do not take our orders from Him. The key to the Master's orders is prayer, and where we are when we pray is a matter of absolute indifference. In whatever way God is engineering our circumstances that is the duty, *pray*.

(2) THE KEY TO THE MASTER'S OWNERSHIP. '. . . the Lord of the harvest.'

According to Our Lord, He owns the harvest, and the harvest is the crisis in innumerable lives all over the world. 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest'– not pray because we are wrought up over the needs of the heathen, not pray to procure funds for a society, but *pray to the Lord of the harvest*. It is appalling how little attention we pay to what Our Lord says. 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so *send* I you,' viz., to put in a sickle, to reap. All over the world, there are crises in lives, they are all around us, heathen and Christian, we meet them by the score every day we live; but unless we are set on obeying our Master's orders, we will never see them. Supposing the crisis comes in my father's life, my brother's life, am I there as a labourer that the harvest may be reaped for Jesus? Jesus said 'Go and disciple all nations in My Name,' and we cannot disciple others unless we ourselves are disciples. The evangelical emphasis has too often been: 'So many souls saved. Thank God, now they are all right.' The idea being that we have done this thing for God. It is God who saves men, we have to do the discipling when they are saved.

(*a*) *His Position in His own World.* Col. i. 16–18. Our Lord's position in His own world is that He

created it. From the remotest star to the last grain of sand, 'all things were created by Him.' His own creatures always recognised Him—'He came unto His own things.' (John i. 11. *R.V. marg*). They do not recognise our lordship because we have too much of the brute about us, and the whole creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God.

(*b*) *His Position among His own People.* John i. 11. 'And they that were His own received Him not.' Jesus is never recognised by any man until the personal crisis is reached, and that is the meaning of conviction of sin. He is the owner of *the harvest*, not of everyone, they will not have Him until the point of the crisis is reached. Jesus Christ owns the harvest which is produced in men by the distress of conviction of sin, and that is the harvest we have to pray that labourers may be thrust out to reap. We may be so taken up with the activities of a denomination, we may give ourselves up to this committee and that, whilst all round about us people are ripe unto harvest, and we are not reaping one of them, but wasting our Lord's time in over-energised activities to further some cause or denomination.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of the harvest. There are no nations whatever in His outlook, no respect of persons with Him; His outlook is *the world.* How many of us pray without respect of persons, and with respect to only one Person, Jesus Christ?

(*c*) *His Position over His own Disciples.* John xvii. 6. 'Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me.' The disciple is Christ's own, and the disciple is not above his Master. He tells us to pray, His

Spirit is abroad, and the fields are white already to harvest, but the eyes of all saving His disciples are holden. If for one whole day, quietly and determinedly, we were to give ourselves up to the ownership of Jesus and to obeying His orders, we would be amazed at the close of the day to realise what He had packed into that one day. We say – 'Oh, but I have a special work to do.' No Christian has a special work to do. A Christian is called to be Jesus Christ's own, one chosen by Him, one who is not above his Master, one who does not dictate to Jesus what he intends to do. Our Lord calls to no special work, He calls to Himself. Pray to the Lord of the harvest, and He will engineer circumstances and thrust us out.

(3) The Key to the Master's Option. 'That He will send forth labourers into His harvest.'

The form the prayer is to take is also dictated by the Master – 'that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.' This leaves no room for the 'amateur providence' notion which arises out of the neglect to take our orders from Jesus Christ. We must pray to the Lord of the harvest, and take our orders from Him and from no one else. The desire to be an amateur providence always arises when Jesus Christ is not recognised as the universal Sovereign.

(*a*) *The Direction of the Work.* John iv. 35–38. The 'other men' who laboured are the prophets and apostles, they have 'entered into their labours.' The great Sower of the seed of the Redemption is the Holy Ghost. The direction of the work is at the option of the Master, not at the choice of the

disciple. Mark the significance of the term 'labour.' We refuse to pray unless we get thrills. May God save us from that counterfeit of true prayer, it is the intensest form of spiritual selfishness. We have to *labour*, and to labour along the line of His direction. Jesus Christ says – *Pray*. It looks stupid, but we labour at it, and results happen all the time from His standpoint because God creates something in answer to prayer, and by means of prayer, that was not in existence before. 'Labour,' it is the one thing we will not do. We will take open air meetings, we will preach – but labour at prayer! There is nothing thrilling about a labouring man's work, but it is the labouring man who makes the conceptions of the genius possible; and it is the labouring saint who makes the conceptions of his Master possible.

(*b*) *The Disposition of the Worker*. Matthew x. 24. Wherever the providence of God may dump us down – in a slum, in a shop, in the desert – we have to labour along the line of His direction. Never allow this thought –'I am of no use where I am', because you certainly cannot be of any use where you are not! Pray wherever He has engineered your circumstances, ejaculate to Him all the time. Impulsive prayer, the prayer that looks so futile, is the thing God heeds more than anything else. Jesus says –'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask *what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you.' Think what an astonishment it will be when the veil is lifted to find the number of souls that have been reaped for Jesus because our disposition had made Him Master, and we had got into the habit of taking our orders from

Him. Our Lord in one of His parables reveals that God sows His saints in the most useless places, according to the judgment of the world; He puts them where He likes. Where God is being glorified, that is where He puts His saints, and we are no judge at all of where that is.

(*c*) *The Distinctness of the Way.* John xiv. 6. The Master says He is the Way, then abide in Him; He says He is the Truth, then believe in Him; He says He is the Life, then live on Him.

Prayer is the answer to every problem that there is. How else could Our Lord's command in John xiv. 1 be fulfilled in our experience? How could we have an untroubled heart if we believed that the heathen who had not heard the Gospel were damned? What would the Redemption of Jesus Christ be worth, of what use would the revelation given in John iii. 16 be, if it depended on the laggard laziness or Christians as to whether men are saved or not?

We have to live depending on Jesus Christ's wisdom not on our own. He is the Master, and the problem is His not ours. We have to use the key He gives us, the key of prayer. Our Lord is putting the key into our hands, and we have to learn to pray under His direction. That is the simplicity which He says His Father will bless.

THE KEY TO THE MISSIONARY

Matthew xxviii. 16–20.

(1) The Universal Sovereignty of Christ. 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.'

The 'all things' of Matthew xi. 27 is limited to the revelation of the Father; the 'all power' of Matthew xxviii. 18 refers to the absolute sovereign universal power of the Risen Lord. 'All power is given unto Me . . . go ye therefore, and teach all nations.' The basis of the missionary appeal is the Authority of Jesus Christ. Our Lord puts Himself as the supreme sovereign Lord over His disciples. He does not say the heathen will be lost if you do not go, but simply—'This is My commandment to you as My disciples, Go and teach all nations.' He does not say—'Go into all the world;' or, 'Go into the foreign field,' but simply—'Go and teach,' i.e., 'preach and teach out of a living experience of Myself.' We are all based on a conception of importance, either our own importance, or the importance of someone else; Jesus tells us to go and teach based on a revelation of *His* importance. 'All power is given unto *Me* . . . go *ye* therefore . . .

(*a*) *The Real Solitude with Christ.* 'Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain. . .' The disciples had been in intimate fellowship with Jesus day and night for three years; they had seen Him go through the unfathomable agony of Gethsemane; they had seen Him put to death on

Calvary; they had seen Him after His Resurrection, and now they stand in solitude with Him. If we want to know the universal sovereignty of Christ, we must get into solitude with Him. It is not sufficient for someone else to tell us about Him, we must perceive with our own eyes who He is, we must know Him for ourselves. Jesus Christ alone is the key to the missionary.

The danger to-day is to make practical work the driving wheel of our enterprises for God. All our intense social work and the aggressive movements of our day are apt to be anti-Christian. They are antagonistic to the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ, because they are based on the conception that human ingenuity is going to bring in the Kingdom of God, and so the Lord Jesus is made of no account.

(*b*) *The Right Spot to meet Christ.* 'Where Jesus had appointed them.' 'Come unto Me,' that is the right spot to meet Jesus Christ. 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden–' and how many missionaries are! We banish these marvellous words of the universal Sovereign of the world to the threshold of an evangelistic after-meeting. They are the words of Jesus to His disciples. He says 'Come,' and we deliberately will not take time to come. If we do not take time to obey Him and come, we will be inclined to call God's messages the devil. We are so busy in work for Him, and He just touches us and down we go, and in our panic we say – 'Oh, that must be the devil'. It was God. 'Despise not the chastenings of the Lord.'

We must get to the place of real solitude with

Christ, He is our mountain-height and our sea-calm; He is the recreating power; He is the universal Sovereign. He tells us to consider the lilies; we say – No, we must consider life. We mistake the mechanism of life for life itself, and that idea has become incorporated into Christian work. In the active work we do for God we do not really believe that Jesus Christ is sovereign Lord; if we did, we would fuss less and build more in faith in Him. We cannot do the Saviour's work by fuss, but only by knowing Him as the supreme sovereign Lord.

(*c*) *The Rectified Sight of Christ.* 'And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted.' It is not the doubt of unbelief, but the doubt of wonder – Can it really be so simple as that? If it is not as simple as that, it is all wrong. When we transacted business with the sovereign Christ, the misgiving in our heart was that it was too simple. The simplicity is the very thing that is of Jesus; anything that is not simple is not of Him. Anything that is complicated is not of His sovereignty but of our self-interest, our self-will, our self-consideration.

It is a great thing to have our spiritual sight tested by the Celestial optician, to watch the way in which He rectifies and readjusts our sight. There is one unmistakable witness that Jesus has spoken to us, and that is the gift of His peace. 'My peace I give unto you.' No matter how complicated the circumstances are, one minute of contact with Jesus and the fuss is gone, the panic is gone, all the shallow emptiness is gone, and His peace is put in, absolute tranquillity, because of the truth of what He says – 'All power is given unto Me.' Do we

look and act as if we believed He had all power in heaven and in earth? What is our actual life like? Is it conducted on the line of John xiv. 1, an undisturbedness of heart arising out of belief in Jesus? We must remember to take time to worship the Being Whose Name we bear.

(2) The Unobtrusive Service of the Commission. 'Go ye therefore.'

These words are simply the introduction to a commission. The unobtrusive service of the commission is outlined in the quiet, almost commonplace statement – 'Go your way, remembering what I have told you.'

(*a*) *How to Go.* Acts i. 8. There is always the danger of starting up false enthusiasm in missionary work, and people say – 'Oh yes, I will go, where shall I go?' That is like beginning a race falsely and having to go back to the starting point. Our Lord's word 'go' simply means 'live,' and Acts i. 8 describes the 'going.' Jesus did not say to the disciples – '*Go* into Jerusalem, *go* into Judæa, *go* into Samaria, *go* into the uttermost part of the earth;' but – '*Ye shall be witnesses unto Me*' in all these places: He undertakes to establish the goings. So many people are obsessed with this idea – 'What are you going to *do*?' I hope none of us are going to *do* anything: I hope we are going to *be* what He wants us to be.

In Matthew xxviii. 19 Our Lord does not say – Go into all the world, but – Go ye therefore and teach . . . He does the engineering; and in Acts i. 8 He does not say 'Ye shall receive power, and *you shall go* into Jerusalem' – but – '*Ye shall be*

witnesses unto Me.' How the disciples went is described later in the Acts of the Apostles, they went at the point of the sword, persecution arose and scattered them in the providence of God. 'How to go' refers to the personal spiritual character of the missionary, not to his feet.

(*b*) *How to Keep Going.* John xv. 7. These wonderful words tell us how to keep going in our personal lives, viz., by the words of Jesus. 'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you.' We have continually to pull ourselves up short and recognise the amazing simplicity of Jesus Christ's counsel. The reason we get perplexed is that we do not believe He is Sovereign Lord, we do not believe that He will never forget anything we remember, we conjure up a hundred and one things which we imagine He has forgotten. Instead of praying to the Lord of the harvest to thrust out labourers, we pray – 'O Lord, keep my body right; see after this matter for me, and that matter.' Our prayers are taken up with our concerns and our own needs, and only once in a while do we pray for what He tells us to. 'Ye shall ask *what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you.' We must feed on His word, and that will keep our spiritual life going. Where we are placed is a matter of indifference. God does the engineering, and He sends us out. 'Has God given you a special call to this place?' He never does. The place is arranged for by His providence, not by His call.

(*c*) *How to Keep Going Till We're Gone.* Acts xx. 24. This verse tells us how to keep going till we're gone – firstly, by not being moved by afflictions from confidence in the sovereignty of Jesus Christ,

and secondly by not considering our life dear unto ourselves but dear only to Jesus Christ for the carrying out of His purposes, and thirdly by continuing to testify to the Redemption of Jesus Christ and fulfilling the ministry we have received of Him, and we will go all together at the same time, like Oliver Wendell Holmes' pony chaise, every part worn out at the same time. That is what happens in a wholesome Christian life.

(3) The Unique Sacrament of the Charter. 'And teach all nations.'

That is the central point of the commission – 'Teach all nations,' i.e., make disciples; disciple everyone, not proselytise everyone. There is nothing more objectionable than the spiritual prig. The type for the missionary is God's own Son, and He did not go about button-holing men. There were plenty of promising men in Our Lord's day, one of them came to Jesus and asked what he might do to inherit eternal life, and the words Jesus spoke to him sent him away in heartbreaking discouragement. Our Lord never pleaded, He never cajoled, He never entrapped; He simply spoke the sternest words mortal ears ever heard, and then left it alone. Our Lord has a perfect understanding that when once His word is heard, it will bear fruit sooner or later.

To-day a number of hysterical and sentimental things are apt to gather round the missionary appeal. The needs of the heathen is made the basis of the appeal instead of the authority of Jesus Christ. The need is made the call; that may be good up to a certain point, but it is not the line for the disciples of Jesus Christ. Our Lord did not tell His disciples

to gather together and select certain people and send them out. That is what is being done in many places to-day because we do not take our conception of missionary enterprise from the New Testament. We adapt the New Testament to suit our own ideas, consequently we look on Jesus Christ as one Who assists us in our enterprises. The New Testament idea is that Jesus Christ is the absolute Lord over His disciples.

(*a*) *Administer your Learning.* John xvii. 17–18. A disciple must administer what he has learned to those who are ripe for it. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the harvest, and the harvest is the critical moment in individual lives produced by conviction of sin, and Jesus alone is the judge of when that moment comes.

Many years ago I knew a godly old shepherd in the Highlands, John Cameron. He was marvellously used by God in his contact with people, whenever he talked to them about their souls they would get saved. One summer John said to me – 'If you get permission to talk to my ploughman about his soul, do.' And I said, naturally, 'Why don't you talk to him yourself?' Then he said – 'Didn't I say, If you get permission? If you don't know about getting permission, you don't know anything about the Holy Ghost. Do you think I talk to everyone I meet? If I did, I would make God a liar. No, I have to get permission before I talk to a soul.'

This ploughman was with John for three years, and they were together every day bringing the sheep over the hills, and John never once spoke to

him about his soul. They would meet people on the hills, and John would talk to them and they would get saved, but he never said a word to the ploughman about spiritual things. Until at last one day the ploughman burst out – 'For God's sake, talk to me about my soul, or I'll be in hell.' So John did talk to him, and the man got wonderfully saved. Then he asked John Cameron why he had not spoken to him before. And John said 'Probably you know why better than I do – I didn't get permission.' Then the ploughman told him this – 'When you 'fee'd' me, I knew you were a religious man, and I said to some of my mates – If old John talks to me about my soul, I'll let him know what he is doing.'

So the administering of the word is not ministering it where we think it is needed; the word has to be sown in living touch with the Lord of the harvest, sown in touch with Him in solitude and prayer, and He will bring the folks round – black and white, educated and uneducated, rich and poor. They are all there, white already to harvest, but most of us are so keen on our own notions that we do not recognise that they are ripe for reaping. If we are in touch with Jesus Christ, He says all the time – This is the moment, this one here, that one there, is ready to be reaped. We say – 'Oh but I want to go and get scores of heathen saved, I do not want to be the means of reaping my brother;' but the brother happens to be the one who is white to harvest. The commission is to teach, to disciple, that is, to administer the word.

(*b*) *Abandon Your Life.* John xx. 23. These words

refer to the sacrament of an abandoned life, filled with the Holy Ghost, through whom the Sovereign Lord makes His words spirit and life. 'That was exactly the word I needed, how did you know?' You did not know anything about it, you were living in abandoned devotion to Jesus and He administered the word through you. It is not by our wits and ingenuity or by our agony and distress or by our piety, but entirely by our abandon to Jesus Christ.

(*c*) *Apply Your Loyalty.* Rev. ii. 10. These words reveal how to apply our loyalty to our Sovereign Lord in every condition and every circumstance. 'Be thou faithful unto death.'

The key to the missionary is the absolute Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must get into real solitude with Him, feed our soul on his word, and He will engineer our circumstances. 'Consider the lilies, how they grow – they live where they are put, and we have to live where God places us. It is not the going of the feet but the going of the life in real vital relationship to Jesus Christ. God will bring round a stationary life far more than He can ever bring round a 'going' missionary, if the 'going' missionary is not one whose life is hid with Christ in God. The goings must be of God; He engineers the circumstances. There are a hundred and one things in human life that we cannot control; but Jesus says –'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.' Then what are we up to with all our worrying? He says 'Let not your heart be troubled . . . *believe also in Me.*'

'All power is given unto Me . . . therefore go

ye.' 'Go established in Me, and disciple everyone whom I bring around you, I will tell you when they are ripe for it.' We shall find that it is not possible to be self-conscious servants of Jesus. We are never of any use to Him in our self-conscious moments, it is in the ordinary times when we are not thinking about it, but are living simply in faith in Him, that He is giving out the sacrament of His word through us. 'He that believeth on Me . . . out of him shall flow rivers of living water.'

THE KEY TO THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE

Luke xxiv. 47–49.

(1) The Remissionary Message of the Missionary. 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name.' v. 47.

It is easy to forget that the first duty of the missionary is not to uplift the heathen, to heal the sick, to civilise savage races, because all that sounds so rational and so human, it is so easy to arouse interest in it, to get funds for it. The primary duty of the missionary is to preach 'repentance and remission of sins in His name.' The key to the missionary message is irrespective of whether the missionary be a doctor, a teacher, an industrial worker, a nurse – the missionary message is the remissionary purpose of Our Lord Jesus Christ's death. The idea of the 'missionary' class, the 'ministerial' class, the 'Christian worker' class has arisen out of our ideas of civilised life, not out of the New Testament faith and order. The New Testament faith and order is that as Christians we do not cease to do our duty as ordinary human beings, but that in addition to all that, we have been given by regeneration the key to the missionary message, viz., the proclamation of the remissionary purpose of the life and death of Our Lord. We have not to leave the other work undone, but to do it so instinctively and naturally that it does not interfere with our proclaiming of the missionary message. Where we are placed is a

matter of God's providential arrangement for us.

(*a*) *The Limitless Significance of Christ the Lamb of God.* 1 John ii. 2.

It is possible to take for study any phase of Our Lord's life, the healing phase, the teaching phase, the saving and sanctifying phase, but there is nothing limitless about any of these. But take this: 'The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,' that is limitless. The key to the missionary message is the limitless significance of Jesus as the propitiation for sins. A missionary is one who is soaked in that revelation, that Jesus Christ is 'the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' The key to the missionary message is not the kindness of Jesus, not His going about doing good, not His revealing of the Fatherhood of God, but the remissionary aspect of His life and death. This aspect alone has a limitless significance, viz., that He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

(*b*) *The Limitless Significance of Sin Against the Lamb of God.* 2 Cor. v. 21.

If the significance of Christ as the propitiation for sins is limitless, the domain to which His propitiation applies is also limitless. Sinfulness against Christ is as limitless as the propitiation. 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' (Romans v. 12). We are apt to talk sentimental nonsense about the Universal Fatherhood of God; to knock the bottom board out of Redemption by saying that God is love and of course He will forgive sin; or else we narrow it

down and make salvation depend on a certain way of putting the truth. When the Holy Spirit comes into us, He makes us know that God is *holy* love and therefore He cannot forgive sin apart from the Atonement; He would contradict His own nature if He did. The only ground on which God can forgive sin and reinstate us in His favour is through the Cross of Christ, and in no other way.

'Him who knew no sin, He made to be sin'– Jesus Christ went through identification with sin and put it away on the Cross so that every man on earth might be freed from sin by the right of His Atonement. God made His own Son to be sin that He might make the sinner a saint –'that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.'

The key to the missionary message is not man's view or predilection regarding Redemption, but the revelation given by Our Lord Himself concerning His life and death, 'the Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many.' When the Holy Ghost comes in, He brings us into touch with the Lord Jesus Himself, and gives us the key to the missionary message, which is not the proclaiming of any particular view of salvation, but the proclaiming of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. The Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our heart the love of God, and the love of God is world-wide; there is no patriotism in the missionary message. This does not mean that patriots do not become missionaries, but it does mean that the missionary message is not patriotic, it is irrespective of all race conditions, it is for the whole world. 'God so loved *the world* . . .'

Sin against Christ the Lamb of God is world-wide; the propitiation of Christ is world-wide, and the missionary's message is world-wide, it is a message not of condemnation but of remission. 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.'

The only final thing in the world is the Redemption of Jesus.

(*c*) *The Limitless Significance of the Sermon on Christ.* John i. 29.

The significance of the sermon on Christ the Lamb of God is limitless because He is the Lamb *of God*, not of man. 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' The Bible reveals all through that Our Lord bore the sin of the world by *identification*, not by *sympathy*. He came here for one purpose only, to bear away the sin of the world in His own Person on the Cross. He came to redeem men, not to set them a wonderful example. We have to beware of becoming the advocate of a certain view of the limitless. The Redemption avails for everyone—'The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,' not the sin of those who belong to any particular country, but *the sin of the world*. The words are worthy only of Almighty God's wisdom, not of man's.

(2) The Regenerative Magnitude of the Mission. '. . . preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem.'

'These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.' (Rev. xiv. 4.) These words form a magnificent commentary on sacramental preaching, i.e., preaching 'in His name.'

(*a*) *The Personal Possession of the Nature of the Lamb of God.*

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples, and to no one else. A disciple means a believer in Jesus, one who has given up his right to himself to the ownership of Christ. 'You must possess My nature in yourself,' says Jesus, 'and then go and preach in My Name,' i.e., 'in My nature.'

(*b*) *The Powerful Programme of the Naïveté of the Lamb of God.*

Naïveté means natural simplicity and unreservedness of thought. The Divine babyhood of the phrase –'preach in His name!' It is entirely free from diplomacy in any shape or form. The amazing simplicity of the nature of God is foolish judged by human wisdom and yet 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men.'

Notice the simplicity of Jesus Christ's command – 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.' The key to the missionary message is the proclamation of this gospel of propitiation for the sins of the whole world. We must be careful lest we become too wise for Jesus and say –'Oh but the people will never understand.' We should say – God knows how they will understand, therefore we will do what He tells us. If we have got hold of the truth of God for ourselves, we have to give it out and not try to explain it. It is our explaining of God's truth that befogs men. Let the truth come out in all its rugged force and strength, and it will take effect in its own way. 'That *repentance and remission of sins* should be preached. . .' We are not to preach the

doing of good things, good deeds are not to be preached, they are to be performed by human beings.

(*c*) *The Particular Place of the Negotiations of the Lamb of God*' . . . .'among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' The particular place at which Our Lord tells His disciples to begin is where He is not believed in, and we do not need to go to the back of beyond for that. It may be first inside our own skull, the intellect that will not believe in Him. If we remain true to Jesus and to His command to preach in His name, it will mean encountering hostility when we come in contact with the culture and the wisdom and the education that is not devoted to Jesus.

(3) The Responsive Martyrdom of the Missionary. 'And ye are witnesses of these things.' v. 48.

These imperative words are spoken to Jesus Christ's disciples. A witness is one who has deliberately given up his life to the ownership of another, not to a cause, and to death he will never swerve from his allegiance.

(*a*) *The Wonder of Witnessing.* 'Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you,' and in Acts i. 8 Jesus tells them what the result of the coming of the promise of the Father will be, viz., 'Ye shall be witnesses unto Me.' Over-zealousness for the cause of Christ prevents many a man from being a witness to Jesus. 'What are you being trained for? Are you going to be a minister, a deaconess, a missionary? What is the use of all this training?' Bible training and missionary training is not meant

to train men for that for which human nature can train itself. Religious institutions start out on the right line of making witnesses to Jesus, then they get swept off on to the human line and begin to train men for certain things, to train for a cause or for a special enterprise, or for a denomination, and the more those training places are multiplied, the less chance is there of witnesses for Jesus being made. Nowadays we are in danger of reversing Jesus Christ's order, it is the missionary societies and the churches that send out missionaries, and there stands the eternal word of Christ—'As My Father hath sent me, even *so I send you*.' A missionary too often is sent first by a denomination, and secondly by Christ. No matter how devoutly we may talk about Jesus in our meetings, He has to take the last place.

One way in which Satan comes as an angel of light to Christians to-day is by telling them there is no need to use their minds. We *must* use our minds, we must get the full power of our intellect going at full blaze for God on any subject that awakens us in our study of His word, always keeping the secret of the life hid with Christ in God. Think of the sweat and labour and agony of nerve that a scientific student will go through in order to attain his end, and then think of the slipshod, lazy way we go into work for God.

(*b*) *The Woe of Witnessing.* A missionary is one who is wedded to the charter of his Lord and Master. 'I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' It is easier to belong to a coterie that tells what God has done

for us, easier to become a devotee to Divine healing, or to a special type of sanctification. Paul did not say –'Woe is me if I do not preach what Jesus Christ has done for me,' but –'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.' Our personal experience is a mere illustration to explain the wonderful difference the Gospel has made to us. Our experience is the gateway into the Gospel for us, but it is not the Gospel. This is the Gospel –'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name.'

(*c*) *The Worship of Witnessing*. Worship is the love offering of our keen sense of the worth-ship of God. True worship springs from the same source as the missionary himself. To worship God truly is to become a missionary, because our worship is a testimony to Him. It is presenting back to God the best He has given to us, publicly not privately. Every act of worship is a public testimony, and is at once the most personally sacred and the most public act that God demands of His faithful ones.

THE LOCK FOR THE MISSIONARY KEY

Romans x. 14–15.'

(1) The Discovered Sense of Responsibility. '*How* then shall they call . . . ?'

The awakened sense of responsibility to God for the whole world is seen in the rousing up of the sympathy of the Christian community towards missionary enterprise. Within recent years missionary organisation has reached almost the last limit of perfection from the human standpoint. But if all that the perfection of organisation does is to discover a new sense of responsibility without an emphatic basing of everything on Redemption, it will end in a gigantic failure. To-day many are interested in the foreign field because of a passionate interest in something other than the Lord Jesus and His command – Go ye therefore and make disciples. All this organsiation ought to mean that we can go ahead as never before, but if once the dethronement of Jesus creeps in, all the organisation will but perfect the lock which cannot open of itself.

There are wonderful things about light, but there are also terrible things. When once the light of God's Spirit breaks in a heart and life that has been perfectly happy and peaceful without God, it is hell for that one. 'If I had not come, they had not had sin.' If we take this aspect of things out of the individual setting and put it into the universal

setting, we will see the reason of the antipathy to foreign missions, because the light has to bring confusion and disaster. The light produces hell where before there was peace, it produces pain where before there was death. God's method in the path of light is destructive before it is constructive. The missionary is the incarnation of Holy Ghost light, and when he comes, all the things of the night tremble. It is the missionaries who have split up the night of heathenism, not the incoming of civilisation, but the witnessing of men and women who are being true to God.

In this country we know nothing about what Jesus speaks of in Matthew x. 34–39, but wherever the missionary brings the evangel of Jesus, he will have to face it. Those who become converts to Jesus have to go through these things literally, they are persecuted and flung out, and unless the missionary knows God and trusts in Him entirely, he will step down to a lower level and compromise, and tell the people they need not do certain things exactly along the line Jesus indicates. But if he stands true to God, he will preach the truth, no matter what pain and cost the converts have to endure. No nervous system can stand that strain, no sensitiveness of mind can stand the test, nothing but the Holy Ghost can stand it, because He has the Mind of God.

(2) The Discovered Service of Reasonableness. '*How* shall they believe . . . ?'

Never before has there been such an educated and reasonable and intense grasp of all the problems, social and international and personal, as there is

to-day. Everything has been laid at the service of the missionary. It is an opening that makes us hold our breath with amazement, and at the same moment sink back – but who has the key? All the civilising forces and educating forces and healing forces are in perfect trim, the fulness of time has come as never before, the only thing that is lacking is the key that fits the lock. To-day the emphasis is apt to be not on what Jesus emphasised – Go and make disciples, but on the reasonable aspect of missionary work, the medical, civilising and educational. These are all admirable, and if the key were used, they would make it much easier to get into the heart of the problem, and would facilitate rapidly our Lord's purpose, but the danger is that we have forgotten the key. The key is the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His supreme authority.

(3) The Discovered Scheme of Representatives. '*How* shall they hear . . . ?'

There is nothing more thrilling than the realisation of what is at the disposal of the Christian church to-day. Every element of science and skill and learning has been taxed to its limit to serve the missionary purpose. It is a magnificent scheme, and all of it is in order that the world might hear. 'How shall they hear without a preacher?' The work that is being done cannot be too highly praised, but it is not preaching. 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel,' that was the burning message of the apostle Paul. In spite of all the perfection of organisation and magnificent equipment and tremendous resolve, the ideal for which the whole thing was started is frequently not fulfilled, and the scheme

ends simply as something to admire. That accounts for the mixture of exaltation and of despair, just when everything seems ripe for God and our hopes are raised to the highest pitch, we are suddenly chilled, because there is no message, nothing to be believed, nothing for the world to hear. All this organisation has enabled us to re-arrange and systematise the problems, but it cannot solve the problems. It is not that the scheme is wrong. What is wrong is that the key has been lost, the Lordship of Jesus Christ has been forgotten, His supreme authority over the missionary has been ignored, He is not realised as King of kings.

Out of the centre of His own agony in the Garden, Our Lord counsels us to 'watch and pray lest we slip into temptation.' Missionary enterprise will reveal more quickly than anything whether we have been caught up by the lure of wrong roads to the Kingdom. When we pray 'Thy Kingdom come,' we have to see that we have allowed the King to have His way in us first, that we are personally related to Him by sanctification. God's plan is that the truth must die –'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone . . .' John xii. 24. Christian work if it is spiritual has followed that law, at home and everywhere, because that is the only way in which it can bring forth God's fruit.

(4) The Discovered Source of Reserves. '*How* shall they preach . . .?'

A missionary is one sent by Jesus as the Father sent Him. Our Lord's first obedience was not to the needs of men, but to the will of His Father, and

the first great duty of the Christian is not to the needs of his fellow men, but to the will of his Lord. To elevate the heathen, to lift up the down-trodden and oppressed, is magnificent, but it is not the reason for missionary enterprise. The call of Jesus Christ does not exonerate any of us from doing our duty as human beings. The teaching of the New Testament is that we ought to be doing all these things to the best of our ability, but missionary enterprise is another thing. A missionary is one who is armed with the key to the missionary lock while he pursues his ordinary calling in life. Our Lord's human life was going about doing good, and the disciple is not above his Master. We need to remember that Christians must do all that human beings ought to do, and much more, because they are supernaturally endued, but we must never confound that with what Our Lord has entrusted His servants to do, viz., to go and make disciples.

What is needed to-day is *Christian* sociology, not sociology Christianised. One way in which God will re-introduce the emphasis on the Gospel is by bringing into His service men and women who not only understand the problems, but who have learned another thing, viz., that the secret of the whole thing is supernatural regeneration, personal holiness wrought by the grace of God.

Jesus Christ came to do what no human being can do, He came to redeem men, to alter their disposition, to plant in them the Holy Spirit, to make them new creations in Christ Jesus. Christianity is not the obliteration of the old, but the transfiguration of the old. Jesus Christ did not

come to teach men to be holy: He came to make men holy. His teaching has no meaning for us unless we enter into His life by means of His death. The Cross is the great central point. Jesus Christ is not first a Teacher, He is first a Saviour, and the thing that tells in the long run in the missionary's life is not the successful understanding of His teaching but the realisation in his own personal life of the meaning of the Cross. There is only one Who saves, and that is God. The missionary is there to proclaim the marvel of that salvation, and what he proclaims becomes a sacrament in himself. He is made the incarnation of what he preaches. The missionary will be put in places where he has to stand alone because he is being held true to the content of the Gospel as it is in Jesus. There is a loneliness which comes from a defiant heroism which has no element of the Gospel in it.

There is no more wholesome training for the foreign field than doing our duty in the home field. The foreign field is apt to get a glamour over it because it is away somewhere else. There is an inspiration and sense of the heroic about going to the foreign field – until we get there, and find that the most terrible things we ever touched at home were clean and vigorous compared to the corruption that has to be faced there, and unless the life is hid with Christ in God before it starts, it will become exclusive and narrow, it will never become the servant of all men, it will never wash the feet of others. Therefore we come back to the first principle – 'The heathen shall know that I am the Lord *when I am sanctified in you before their eyes.*'

(5) The Discovered Supremacy of Redemption. 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!'

Thank God for the countless numbers of individuals who realise that the only Reality is Redemption; that the only thing to preach is the Gospel; that the only service to be rendered is the sacramental service of identification with Our Lord's Death and Resurrection. To preach the Gospel is to proclaim that God saves from sin and regenerates into His Kingdom anyone and everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus. But it means even more than that – it means to 'disciple all nations' not only on the authority of Jesus, but on the flesh and blood evidence of entire sanctification in the life of the missionary. 'When it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen.'

Thus we end where we began, with Our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the First and the Last, and laying His hands on the missionary, He says – 'Fear not, I have the keys.'

THE KEY TO MISSIONARY DEVOTION

3 John 7.

We live in a complex world, amid such a mass of sensibilities and impressionabilities, and we are apt to imagine that it is the same with God. It is our complicated rationalism that makes the difficulty. We have to beware of every simplicity saving the simplicity that is in Christ.

The key to missionary devotion is put in our hand at the outset, viz., 'For His Name's sake they went forth.' The key is amazingly simple as in everything with which Our Lord has to do. Our difficulties arise because we lose the key, and we lose the key when we are not simple.

(1) The Domination of the Master Himself. John xxi. 15–16.

The Master dominates – not domineers – His disciples. It is the domination of holy love. If once, for one moment, we see the Lord, though we may fall and slip away, we will never rest until we find Him again. It is an almighty certainty that the destiny of every human being depends on his relationship to Jesus Christ. It is relationship to Jesus that determines the disciple's destiny, not his relationship to life, or to service, or to usefulness, but simply and solely his relationship to Jesus Christ.

(*a*) *Love for Him.* 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest

thou Me more than these?' V. 15 points out that the sovereign preference of the disciples' person must be for the Person of the Lord Jesus over every other preference. The preference for Him is first and last against all competition. Love is difficult to define, although simple to know; life is difficult to define, although simple to have. Everything which we have as a personal inheritance is difficult to define. That which we obtain, we can to a certain extent define; but that which we have as a personal inheritance is indefinable. Intellect and logic are instruments, they are not life. The tyranny of the intellectual Napoleon is that he makes out that intellect is the life. Intellect is the expression of life. In the same way, theology is said to be religion: theology is the instrument of religion.

Love cannot be defined. If we try and define our love for Jesus Christ, we find we cannot do it. Love is the sovereign preference of our person for another person, and Jesus Christ demands that that other person be Himself. That does not mean we have no preference for anyone else, it means that Jesus has the sovereign preference; within that sovereign preference come all the other loving preferences, down to flowers and animals. The Bible makes no distinction between Divine love and human love, it talks only of Love.

When a disciple is dominated by his love to Jesus Christ, he is not always conscious of Him. It is absurd to think that we have to be conscious all the time of the one we love most. The one we are conscious of is the one we do not love most. A child is not conscious all the time of his love for his

mother. It is the crisis that produces the consciousness. When we are getting into the throes of love, we are conscious of it because we are not in love yet. We imagine that we have to get God into our consciousness; whereas God takes us into His consciousness, consequently we are rarely conscious of Him.

(*b*) *Love to Him.* 'Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee.' In v. 15 Our Lord makes a comparison –'Lovest thou Me more than these?' In v. 16 He makes no comparison. 'Lovest thou Me?' That is love beyond compare. To demand a declaration of love beyond comparison, is to risk losing all. A missionary must be dominated by this love beyond compare to the Lord Jesus Christ, otherwise he will be simply the servant of a denomination or of a cause, or a seeker for relief from a crushing sorrow in work. Many go into Christian work not for the sake of His Name, but in order to find surcease from their own sorrow; or they go into work because of unrequited love, or because of a bereavement or a disappointment. Such workers are not dominated by the Master, and they are likely to strew the mission field with failure and sighs, and to discourage those who work with them. There is only one thing stronger than death, or than any of these things, and that is love.

(*c*) *Love in Him.* V. 17 goes beyond any possibility of profession. Our Lord's question elicits the amazed confession of Peter's deepest heart –'Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.' He did not say – Look at this and that to confirm

it. Love never professes: love confesses. This is the record of the reinstatement of Peter before the other disciples. 'He saith unto him the third time. . . Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time . . .' Our Lord's question repeated three times revealed to Peter's own soul that there was no one he loved more than Jesus, and in utter amazement as he looks at himself in his grief, he says 'Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.' When once the domination of the Master over the heart of a disciple reaches the depth of that expression, then He entrusts His call to that one – 'Feed My sheep.' Our Lord in this incident bases the apostolic office on love, not on faith.

'*Lovest thou Me?*' '*Feed My sheep.*' Three times over Our Lord indicated how love to Himself is to be manifested in the life of the lover, viz., in identification with His interests in others – 'Feed My lambs; feed My sheep.' Our Lord does not ask us to lay down our lives: He says – If you love Me, you will identify yourself with My interests in other people, not – identify *Me* with *your* interests in other people. Feed My sheep, not your sheep, i.e., see that they get nourished in the knowledge of Me.

Paul in 1 Corinthians xiii. 4–8 gives the charter of this love. 'Love suffereth long and is kind, . . . love taketh no account of the evil; . . . love never faileth.' This is the love of God expressing itself to those who are neither God nor ourselves. The test of love for Jesus Christ is the practical one, all the rest is sentimental jargon. It is the love of God wrought in us by the personal Holy Ghost. He

sheds abroad the nature of God,' i.e., the love of God, in our heart, and that love works efficaciously through us as we come in contact with others.

(2) The Denomination of the Master's Name. Matthew xxviii. 18–20.

'Make disciples of all nations,' and that cannot be done unless Jesus Christ is Whom He says He is. The apostolic office is not based on faith but on love. The two working lines for carrying out Jesus Christ's command are, first, the sovereign preference of our person for the Person of Jesus Christ; and second, the willing and deliberate identification of our interests with Jesus Christ's interests in other people. Ardour must never be mistaken for love, nor the sense of the heroic for devotion to Jesus, nor self-sacrifice for fulfilling a spiritual destiny. It is much easier to follow on the track of the heroic than to remain true to Jesus in drab, mean streets. Human nature unaided by God can do the heroic business; human pride unaided by God can do the self-sacrificing (cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 1–3); but it takes the supernatural power of God to keep us as saints in the drab commonplace days. The need can never be the call for missionary enterprise. The need is the opportunity. The call is the commission of Christ and relationship to the Person of Christ – 'All power is given unto *Me* . . . *go ye therefore*.' Any work for God started with less than a passion for Jesus Christ as the motive, will end in crushing discouragement and heartbreak.

(*a*) *Loyalty to His Character.* 'All power is given unto Me.' Loyalty to the Master's character means that the missionary believes in his Lord's almighti-

ness on earth as well as in heaven although every common sense rational fact declares loudly that He has no more power than a morning mist. If we are going to be loyal to Jesus Christ's character as it is portrayed in the New Testament, we have a tremendously big task on hand. Loyalty to Jesus is the thing that is stuck at to-day. Folk will be loyal to work, to ideals, to anything, but they are not willing to acknowledge loyalty to Jesus Christ. Christian workers frequently become intensely impatient of this idea of loyalty to Jesus. Our Lord is dethroned more emphatically by Christian workers than by the world. Loyalty to Jesus is the outcome of the indwelling of the personal Holy Spirit, working in us the supernatural Redemption of Christ, and keeping us true to His Name when every common sense fact gives the lie to it. In Psalm lxxiii the Psalmist says that he nearly lost his faith in God because every rational fact seemed to prove that he had trusted a fiction. There is no test to equal the test of remaining loyal to Jesus Christ's character when the ungodly man is in the ascendant. We are apt to become cynical, and a cynical view is always a distorted view, a view arising out of pique because some personal object is being thwarted.

(*b*) *Loyalty to His Call.* 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.' Loyalty to the call of Our Lord means that we keep in contact with His nature (i.e., with His Name), not merely that we keep the letter of His command. 'Except ye become as little children.' That is the meaning of new birth – receiving His nature. The call of the sea, the call of the mountains, the call of the wild, are calls which are per-

fectly in accord with the nature of the caller, not necessarily in accordance with the nature of the one who listens. Everyone does not hear the call of the sea, only the one who has the nature of the sea in him hears it. The call of the mountains does not come to everyone, but only to the one who has the nature of the mountains in him. Likewise the call of God does not come to everyone, it comes only to those who have the nature of God in them. The call of Jesus Christ does not come to everyone, but only to those who have His name, i.e., His nature. Our loyalty is not to stand by the letter of what Jesus says, but to keep our soul continually open to the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(*c*) *Loyalty to His Commission.* 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' Loyalty to the commission means, first of all, that the missionary sets himself to find out all that his Lord taught. There is not a greater test for loyal concentration than that. Jesus did not say – 'Teach salvation,' or, 'teach sanctification;' or, 'teach Divine healing,' but –'Teach whatsoever I have commanded you.' There is no room for the specialist or the crank or the fanatic in misisonary work. A fanatic is one who has forgotten he is a human being. Our Lord never sent out cranks and fanatics, He sent out those who were loyal to His domination; He sent out ordinary men and women, plus a dominating devotion to Himself by the indwelling Holy Ghost. A missionary is not sent by Jesus Christ to do medical work, or educational work, or industrial work: all that is part of the ordinary duty of life, and every man ought to be so

equipped that he is doing these things naturally. But Jesus Christ never sends His disciples to do any of these things; He sends His disciples to teach, to make disciples of all nations. The greatest need for the missionary is to know the New Testament, to know what Jesus taught.

(3) The Detachment for the Master. John xxi. 18–22.

Detachment for the Master means personal attachment to no one and to nothing saving Our Lord Himself. Our Lord did not teach detachment from other things: He taught attachment to Himself. Our Lord was not a recluse, He did not cut Himself off from society, He was amazingly in and out among the ordinary things of life, but He was disconnected fundamentally from it all; He was not aloof, but He lived in another world. His life was so social that men called Him a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. His detachments were on the inside towards God. Our external detachments are often an indication of a secret vital attachment to the thing from which we externally keep away. Before we get rightly detached to Jesus Christ, we spend our time keeping ourselves detached from other things, which is a sure sign of a secret affinity with those things. When we are really detached to Jesus, He can entrust us with all other things. 'Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee,' said Peter, implying – What shall we get? Jesus told him that they would get a hundredfold more of all they had given up, once the detachment to Himself had been formed. This detachment to Jesus is rarely referred to.

(*a*) *The Life Sacrificed.* 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.' These words are a description of the nature of internal sacrifice, and every unspiritual desire will plead against the undesirability of the sacrifice. 'God could never expect me to give up my magnificent prospects and devote my life to the missionary cause.' But in your case He happens to have done so. The battle is yours. He says no more, but He waits.

(*b*) *The Life Sacramented.* 'This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me.' Three irrational conclusions –'death,' 'glorifying God,' 'following Me,' and then at His Ascension Jesus disappears. Our Lord never talks on the basis of reason, He talks on the basis of Redemption. What is nonsense rationally is Redemptive Reality. The 'Follow Me' spoken three years before had nothing mystical in it, it was an external following: now it is a following in internal martyrdom.

'Sacramented' means that the elements of the natural life are presenced by Divinity as they are broken providentially in God's service. We have to be entirely adjusted into Jesus before He can make us a sacrament. The missionary must be a sacramental personality, one through whom the presence of God comes to others.

(*c*) *The Life Sacred.* 'Jesus saith unto him, If

I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me.' Not only is the life of the missionary sacred to God, but the lives of others are sacred also, and when one tries to pry into another's concerns he will receive the rebuke of Our Lord – 'What is that to thee? *follow thou Me*.'

HIS!

'Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me.' John xvii: 6.

It is this aspect of a disciple's life that is frequently forgotten. We are apt to think of ourselves as our own, of the work as our work. A great point in spiritual nobility has been reached when we can really say –'I am not my own.' It is only the noble nature that is mastered – an unpalatable truth to us if we are spiritually stiff-necked and stubborn, and refuse to be mastered. The Son of God is the Highest of all, and the characteristic of His life was obedience. We have to learn that God is not meant for us, but that we are meant for God. Jesus Christ does satisfy the last aching abyss of the human heart, but that must never lead to thinking of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost as an Almighty arrangement for satisfying us. 'Know ye not that ye are not your own?' This realisation is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost.

His! Does that apply to us? Have we realised that our body is not our own but His –'the temple of the Holy Ghost?' Have we realised that our heart and affections are not our own, but His? If so, we will be careful over inordinate affection. Have we realised that all the ambitions of life are His? We are out for one thing only, viz., for Jesus Christ's enterprises. That is the inner secret of the missionary – I know that I am His and that He is

carrying on His enterprises through me; I am His possession and He can do as He likes with me. If we cannot live at home as His, we will find it much more difficult to live in the foreign field as His, we will be more likely to make things ours than to remain loyal to Him. Each one has the setting of his own difficulties and temptations, and so it is with the missionary. If we have been 'wobblers' at home, we will be 'wobblers' out there. If we have learned to face ourselves with God at home, we will face ourselves with God out there. But we have to learn to do it, and it is not easy at the beginning. Where he is placed is a matter of indifference to the missionary; if he maintains his contact with God out of him will flow rivers of living water. We have the notion that we engineer missionary enterprise; it is the genius of the Holy Spirit that makes us 'go.' God does not do anything *with* us, only *through* us; consequently the one thing God estimates in His servants is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ is the only One who has the right to tell us what it means to be His, and in Luke xiv. 26–33 He lays down the conditions of discipleship. Those conditions are summed up in one astounding word – 'hate.' 'If any man come to Me, and hate not . . .' (a hatred of every good thing that divides the heart from loyalty to Me) 'he cannot be My disciple.' Every one of the relationships Jesus mentions may be a competitive relationship, we may prefer to be our mother's or our father's, or our own, and Jesus does not say we cannot be, but He does say –'he cannot be My disciple,' i.e., he

cannot be one over whom Jesus writes the word 'Mine.'

In vv. 28–33 Our Lord is not speaking of the cost the disciple has to estimate, but stating that He has estimated the cost. He is not less than a man among men, and He has counted the cost, that is why He makes the conditions so stern. The man who says –'Lord, Lord,' is not the one Jesus takes on His enterprises, He takes only those men in whom He has done everything, they are the ones upon whom He can rely. Many of us in whom Jesus has done nothing devote ourselves to work for God, consequently we bungle His business, we run up the white flag to the prince of this world and compromise with him. Jesus says that the only ones He will take on His building and battling enterprises are those in whom He has done everything, i.e., those who are devoted to Him because He has altered their disposition.

(1) The Missionary Watching. Matthew xxvi. 40. 'Watch with Me'– with no private point of view of your own, but watch entirely with Me. In the early stages of Christian experience, we do not watch *with* Jesus, we watch *for* Him. We do not know how to watch with Jesus in the circumstances of our lives, in the revelation of His word; we have only the idea of His watching with us, answering our problems, helping us. But Jesus says – '*Watch with Me*.' How is it possible to watch with One whom we do not understand? The early disciples did not understand Jesus in the slightest. They had been with Him for three years, they loved Him to the limit of their natural hearts, but they

had no idea what He meant when He talked of His Kingdom or of His Cross. Jesus was inscrutable to them on those main points. They could not watch with Him for the simple reason that they did not know what He was after. They could not watch with Him in His Gethsemane, they did not know why He was suffering, and they slept for their own sorrow. Then Jesus gives Himself up and they all forsake Him and flee, and when they see Him put to death on the Cross, their hearts are broken. Then after the Resurrection, Jesus comes to them and says –'Receive ye Holy Spirit,' and they learned to watch with Him all the rest of their lives.

The real centre of the disciple's devotion is watching with Jesus. Once we learn to watch with Him, the thought of self is not kept down because it is not there to keep down, self-effacement is complete. Self has been effaced by the deliberate giving up to another self in sovereign preference, and the manifestation of the life in the actual whirl of things is – I am not my own but His.

(2) The Missionary Waiting. Rev. iii. 10. 'Because thou hast kept the word of My patience.' It is not the patience of pessimism, not the patience of exhaustion, but the patience of joyfulness because God reigns. The patience of the saints may be illustrated by likening the saint to a bow and arrow in the hand of God. God is aiming the saint at His mark, and He stretches and strains, and the saint says – 'I cannot stand any more,' but God does not heed, He goes on stretching until His purpose is in sight, then He lets fly, and the arrow reaches His mark.

The vision of God is the source of patience in a saint. Moses 'endured as seeing Him who is invisible.' A man with the vision of God is not devoted simply to a cause or to a particular issue, he is devoted to God Himself. Our Lord sent no one out on the ground of what He had done for them, but only because they had seen Him, and by the power of the Spirit, had perceived Whom He was. Nothing can daunt the man who has seen Jesus. The one who has only a personal testimony as to what Jesus can do for him, may be daunted; but nothing can turn the man who has seen Him. People work themselves to death for a cause, but it takes the power of endurance which comes from a vision of God to go on without seeing results. We are not here for successful service, but to be faithful. Had Jesus any results? We must learn that the disciple is not above his Master before we go into work for Him. We cannot be discouraged if we belong to Him, for it is said of Him –'He shall not fail nor be discouraged.' Discouragement is 'disenchanted egotism.' 'Things are not happening in the way I expected they would, therefore I am going to give it all up.' If we talk like that, it is a sure sign that we are not possessed of love for Him but only of love for ourselves. Discouragement always comes when we insist on our own way.

(3) The Missionary Worshipping. '. . . worship God in the spirit.' (Phil. iii. 3.)

Circumcision is the Old Testament symbol for New Testament sanctification. To worship God in the spirit is not to worship Him sincerely, in the remote part of our nature, but to worship Him by

the power of the Spirit He gives to us. His Spirit never becomes our spirit, He quickens our spirit into oneness with God. Worship is the tryst of sacramental identification with God, the place where we deliberately give back to God the best He has given us that we may be identified with Him in it. 'I beseech you . . . present your bodies a living sacrifice . . . which is your spiritual worship.' A 'living sacrifice,' i.e., the best God gives is given back to Him and becomes an eternal possession to us both. The worship of God is the sacramental element in a saint's life. We have to give back to God in worship every blessing He gives to us.

(4) The Missionary Witnessing. 'Ye shall be witnesses unto Me.' (Acts i. 8.) 'After that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, ye shall be witnesses unto Me.' Who is the Holy Spirit? The One who expounds the nature of Jesus to us. When the Holy Spirit comes in, He not only delivers us from sin, He does infinitely more than that – He makes us one with Our Lord, He makes us witnesses to Jesus, a satisfaction to Him wherever He places us. To be a witness means to live a life of unsullied, uncompromising and unbribed devotion to Jesus. The true witness to Jesus is the one who lets his light shine in works that exhibit the disposition of Jesus. Our Lord makes a witness His own possession, He becomes responsible for him. We have to be entirely His, and to exhibit His Spirit no matter what circumstances we are in. It is extraordinary to watch God alter things. We have to worship God in the difficult circumstances, and He will alter them in two seconds when He chooses. If we

deliberately sign ourselves as 'His,' then all that happens is the fulfilment of Matthew xi. 28-30 – 'Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest . . . Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; . . . and ye shall find rest.'

'Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed;
Lo with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.

'Yea, thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed:
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.'